# THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AND ITS UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

C. M. MacINNES

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BY

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY TUTOR

A. L. SMITH

LATE MASTER OF BALLIOL

WHO ENCOURAGED ME TO WRITE

THIS BOOK

# AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE aim of this book is to state briefly some phases of the Imperial problem, particularly those affected by considerations of nation and race. It is hoped that it will help the general voter, who has not the time for exhaustive study, to form an independent opinion upon these questions.

While I assume full responsibility for any opinions here expressed, I wish to thank Lord Meston, K.C.S.I., for reading through Chapters VII and VIII ; also Sir William Vincent, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., for his help in Chapters V and VI. I am especially indebted to Professor H. E. Egerton for very kindly reading through the proofs, and making many valuable suggestions. I also wish to thank Miss D. A. Macey for her invaluable help throughout.

C. M. MACINNES.

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# THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AND ITS UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

It seems to have been easier for the Victorians than it is for this generation to face the future with confidence. They had a sense of permanence and security about their world and its institutions which is unknown to-day. They were proud to proclaim themselves the heirs of all the ages, and this brought with it, not a sense of burden and responsibility, but pride of achievement and ordered progress. "The centuries behind them like a fruitful land reposed," the present was full of promise, and they could face the future with few misgivings. It seemed to them that the worst was over. There would, they knew, be revolutions and changes in the future, but these would be slight as compared with those through which the world had already gone. Though most of their philosophers and thinkers did not share this general optimism, the average British citizen of the Victorian period believed that his civilisation was founded on

fixed and eternal principles which time might modify but could not destroy.

To-day, that confident optimism no longer exists. In its place there is a wide feeling of gloom and despondency about the future, which is probably as unreasonable as mid-Victorian optimism. Nothing now seems permanent in the world, nothing secure. In one momentous decade events have taken place which will colour history for centuries. Ancient dynasties have gone down, at least one ancient State has disappeared, and many new ones have been created—all have been changed. Though the War swept away much of the old order it did not, as was hoped, destroy those forces for which that old order was supposed to stand. Europe in 1924 is, if anything, in greater chaos than it was in 1914. A spirit of vengeance has dominated France and sullen resentment still embitters Germany. The forces of revolution and reaction have produced Bolshevism on the one hand and Fascism on the other, and no one can say what these may bring forth. The destruction of the Kaliphat and the deposition of the Sultan of Turkey have thrown the Moslem world into disorder.

Beyond Europe the world seems to be in little better case. The millions of Africa are beginning to be stirred with something which resembles race-consciousness, India is passing through what may well be the most critical period in her long history, and China has been compared to a " tray of sand " where nothing is permanent and nothing certain except instability. In the United States the problem of

colour is becoming yearly more and more acute, and the appearance of strange secret societies constitutes a serious menace to that democracy.

Many believe these things are the symptoms of incurable decay. Western civilisation, they say, is worked out, and the world is about to enter upon another Dark Age, more black and hopeless than that which followed on the break-up of the Roman Empire. Though this is an unduly pessimistic view, there is no one who will deny that the present situation of the world is tragically serious.

Examination will show, however, that the outlook, though dark, is not one of unmitigated gloom. Already since the War the League of Nations, in face of tremendous odds, has done much to establish a saner world-order. It must sooner or later admit Germany and Russia as members, but as long as the place of the United States is vacant at the Council Board the work of the League will be crippled. Only with the lapse of many years and the strength which comes from hardened traditions and achievement can the League occupy that commanding position in world-affairs which it already possesses in theory. As new generations arise, accustomed to regard the League as an established institution and not a recent creation, it will reach its full strength. In the meantime it has before it difficult years of growth, and it will require strong friends to stand by its cradle and protect it through the critical years of infancy.

Among present world-states there is none more fitted for this task than the British Empire. As

General Smuts once said, it is in itself a League of Nations, for all those great problems which the League must solve in the future are reproduced on a smaller scale within its borders. It contains representatives of almost every race, every colour, and every creed ; almost every stage in human development between the Australian aboriginal and civilised man can be found among its citizens. It may well be that in the future, when the League has grown to maturity, and can speak with the authority of civilisation, the work of the Empire will be done. That time, however, is still far distant, and for the present and for the immediate future it is to a considerable extent upon the fortunes of the British Empire that civilisation depends. It is one of the last great barriers separating the world from chaos.

To many people one of the most dangerous forces in the present world appears to be unbridled nationalism. Though there is doubtless much good in nationalism, the people of this generation are more conscious of its evils. Within the British Empire it has already made its appearance, and if the Empire is to endure some method of reconciling it with the wider claims of a World-Commonwealth must be discovered. If the British Empire can succeed in this task, then the League can do it for the whole world, and the day of permanent peace will be brought appreciably nearer. If, however, with all its peculiar advantages for a successful solution of this problem the British Empire fails, there can be little hope that the League will succeed

Again, the British Empire, as has already been

pointed out, contains representatives of almost every race. Herein lies, perhaps, the most splendid of all its opportunities, and at the same time the most tremendous of its responsibilities. In the future it seems clear that racialism will bulk larger year by year in world-politics. The reverberations of nationalism which filled the nineteenth century, and still deafen the people of the present age, will doubtless continue, but as time goes on, unless statesmanship can prevent it, this sound will tend to be drowned by the far deeper note of inter-racial strife. It was at one time said: "The world is a single parish." To-day, thanks to the ocean greyhound, wireless, the aeroplane and other mechanical triumphs over space, it has become a single organism. In the days to come the races of the earth must learn to rub shoulders with one another, to discover their common interests, and to mingle in peace.

Here again the British Empire may do a great service for mankind; it may be made the greatest laboratory of inter-racial good-will that the world has yet seen. The problem of black and white in South Africa, of black, white, and brown in Kenya, and the white Australia policy, are not so many isolated domestic questions; they are all phases of one tremendous question—perhaps the most difficult that this century is called upon to answer. Since, in the British Empire, representatives of these different races, colours, and creeds are already combined in one political system, and since even to a slight extent they are all inspired by common aims and common ideals, the conditions for a favourable consideration of this

problem already exist. If again, in spite of these advantages, the British Empire fails, then it seems fairly clear that no power on earth can succeed, and it may turn out, after all, that these triumphs of mechanical invention and these victories over space are only so many additional stimuli to racial antagonism.

The question now may reasonably be asked: For what in the twentieth century does British Imperialism stand? For many reasons, both good and bad, the word "Empire" has become unpopular of late years, and the word "Commonwealth" has been substituted. Whilst it must be acknowledged that British Imperialism has sometimes been a cloak for military ambition and greed, and while many evils have been done in its name, these things are not of its essence. No human institution yet evolved is perfect, but taking a long view, the good the Empire has already done, the good which it still does, and the good which it may do in the future, far outweigh its evils. In the main, it may be said that at the present time British Imperialism represents two great principles—the principle of democratic self-government, and the principle of trusteeship of child-races.

In the present book there is not space to sketch the growth of the self-governing principle. It may be recalled, however, that almost from the first time Englishmen set foot on North American soil they claimed the right to govern themselves in their own way. From that beginning there have developed, in the course of centuries, five self-governing nations within the Empire beyond seas, and one of the prob-

lems of the day is to discover a *modus vivendi* by which these young nations, while remaining members of the Commonwealth, can enjoy the fullest opportunity of self-development and self-expression.

The principle of trusteeship is of more recent growth, Edmund Burke in speaking on the Indian question being the first to state it clearly. He was followed by William Wilberforce, who applied it to British relations with the peoples of Africa, and the result was that the slave trade and slavery disappeared from the Empire. The devoted lives of hundreds of now forgotten Indian civil servants, the unremitting toil and example of missionaries like Livingstone, the wise counsel and administration of British officials like Sir Stamford Raffles, Sir Frank Swettenham, and Sir Frederick Lugard, made this great principle a reality affecting the lives of millions of human beings. It is not for a moment suggested here that all white men in the tropics have been archangels, nor that the British Empire has been built on altruism. Trade as such is not evil, and if properly conducted should be a blessing to all concerned. The British Empire grew, and still exists, because it pays, but there is nothing incompatible in this with the assertion that it has been a great humanising and civilising force. Many white men have gone to the tropics for unworthy, selfish purposes, and many of them have abused the natives, but the work of the teacher, the missionary, the doctor, the soldier, and the civil servant will always remain not only an honour to themselves, but the just subject of pride to the nation that produced them. Perhaps the greatest tribute that

could be paid to their work is that the League of Nations has adopted the principles which they worked out, and embodied them in Article 22 of the Covenant.[1]

The development of these two principles of self-government and trusteeship in one political system is beset with difficulties. They not only appear to be inconsistent when pursued by the same Power, but it frequently happens that they seem to conflict. Great Britain, for example, has promised to extend to India full responsible government in successive stages, but at the same time she is still trustee for the welfare of millions of people belonging to the backward races and depressed classes. The rapidity with which Great Britain fulfils her promise and establishes self-government in India, therefore, must be conditioned not only by the proved capacity of Indian statesmen to assume the burden of responsibility, but also by the extent to which Englishmen feel themselves justified in surrendering to the Indians that trusteeship for which Englishmen have been responsible for over a century. Similar difficulties arise in other parts of the Empire where these principles seem to conflict, and where Great Britain is said to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. In East Africa the white settlers have declared that they will not be made a pawn in the game of Indian politics, and the Indians for their part have charged Great Britain with double-dealing. Doubtless it would be much simpler and much better if the races of the earth had no contact with each other, but that is impossible. Within the Empire or

[1] See Note, Chap. IV, p. 53.

outside of it, both Indians and Europeans must learn that in the modern world it is impossible for any one community to live unto itself alone ; its liberties, its manner of life, its destiny, must always be affected by the interests and aspirations of its neighbours, and no community can avoid that fact. It must be understood that if justice is to be done at all, then in the interests of all sacrifices must be made by each.

The British Empire at the present time may be taken as comprising four sections : the United Kingdom, the self-governing Dominions, India, and the dependent Empire. If it collapses this will probably be due to the failure of Imperial statesmen to adjust the differences which have arisen between these divisions. The problem of Dominion status, the problem of Indian status, the white Australia policy, the Kenya dispute, are all examples of these frictions. It should be pointed out, however, that these problems do not exist merely because the States concerned are members of the British Empire. They are inevitable in some form or other in the modern world, and the destruction of the Empire would not remove them. The fact that the Empire exists, moreover, as has been stated, makes it possible for them to be approached under more favourable circumstances for their solution than would otherwise be possible.

In the following pages an attempt is made to state these questions briefly, and to bring out their implications. No attempt is made to discuss all phases of the Imperial problem. The development of markets within the Empire, the exploitation of its economic resources, the problem of white settlement in the

Dominions, and many other important subjects are not mentioned, but this does not mean that they are not vital. It is felt that before those citizens who are not experts can express a reasoned opinion on any Imperial question, they must first know something of those great national and racial problems with which the Empire is confronted.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PROBLEM OF DOMINION STATUS

In order to understand the problem of Dominion status it will be necessary to bear in mind the fact that there are two general questions involved. There is, in the first place, the problem of the Constitutional relations of the Dominions and the Mother-country as partners in one Imperial Commonwealth; this is a matter of Constitutional law and practice. Secondly, there is the question of the international position of the self-governing Dominions, and this is a matter of international law. In both cases the methods by which the Dominions participate in foreign relations are involved. It would be misleading, however, to attach undue importance to the purely legal and formal aspect in either case, since law can only represent the progress so far made and the positions already attained. It is frequently at variance with present practice and must of necessity always tend to lag behind. Thus, for example, it may well be that the different Dominion Constitutions contain provisions which applied when they were still in the Colonial state, but which in the light of subsequent development are pure anachronisms. It has been frequently complained that outside of their own

territories the Dominions have no jurisdiction for their own subjects, but in view of the debate on this question in the Canadian House of Commons, it is evident that Canadians regard this question as not being absolutely vital.[1]

It would not be necessary to raise this point except for the fact that the Autonomists have attempted to make so much out of it, and to deduce from it the conclusion that, because it exists, the Dominions are still inferior and subordinate to the British Parliament.[2]

Though from the narrow legal point of view this may be technically true, the vital point would seem

[1] On March 20, 1924, in the Canadian House of Commons, Mr. J. S. Woodsworth moved : " That in the opinion of the House, the governing powers of Canada as constituted by the British North America Act, as amended and as altered from time to time hereafter, ought to possess under the British Crown the same powers with regard to Canada, its affairs and its people, as the Parliament of Great Britain possesses in regard to Great Britain, its affairs and its people." After a long debate the motion was withdrawn. —*Canadian Hansard*, March 20, 1924, pp. 530–563.

On June 30, 1924, in the Canadian House of Commons, the Hon. Ernest Lapointe (Minister of Justice) moved the following resolution : " Resolved by the House of Commons, That it is expedient that section ninety-one of the British North America Act, 1867, be amended by adding thereto the following subsection in lieu of that set forth in the address of the Senate and House of Commons to His Majesty the King, adopted by the House and Senate, respectively, on the 24th and the 26th June, 1920.

" 2. An enactment of the Parliament of Canada, if expressed to operate extra-territorially, shall have and be deemed to have had, that operation, if and in so far as it is a law for or ancillary to the peace, order, and good government of Canada.

" And that His Majesty's Government be respectfully requested to promote the necessary legislation for the sanctioning of the said enactment." After a short debate the motion was agreed to. —*Canadian Hansard*, June 30, 1924, pp. 3962–3969.

[2] Sifton, *Political Status of Canada*, p. 5.

to be not that these anachronisms exist, but rather that they will be swept away whenever the law of the Constitution is brought into line with its practice, which is another way of saying whenever the practice has become so well established as to be regarded as law. These questions are, however, of little practical value to the ordinary citizen, no matter how interesting they may be to Constitutional lawyers. Further, it seems to be unwise to introduce into a discussion of this nature that familiar football of the political theorist, the doctrine of indivisible sovereignty. If the theory of sovereignty as understood in the past is inapplicable to the British Commonwealth of to-day, it is the theory which is wrong, not the British Commonwealth. The Austinian [1] doctrine of sovereignty was formulated by political philosophers, to explain a form of political society which no longer exists.

This may seem like trampling on the dead, but it

[1] Austinian Theory. "If a *determinate* human superior, *not* in a habit of obedience to a like superior, receive *habitual* obedience from the *bulk* of a given society, that determinate superior is sovereign in that society, and the society (including the superior) is a society political and independent. . . . In order that a given society may form a society political and independent, the two distinguishing marks which I have mentioned above must unite. The *generality* of the given society must be in a *habit* of obedience to a *determinate* and *common* superior; whilst that determinate person, or determinate body of persons, must *not* be habitually obedient to a determinate person or body. It is the union of that positive with this negative mark which renders that certain superior sovereign or supreme, and which renders that given society (including that certain superior) a society political and independent" (Austin, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, vol. i. pp. 226, 227, edition of 1869, 2 vols., quoted by T. H. Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 94).

For modern view of sovereignty see Prof. Lindsay in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, June 1924.

is none the less necessary, owing to the fact that this generally discredited doctrine still crops up in the most surprising places, as may be seen from the following quotation : [1] "Canada is not a nation. Canada cannot be a nation . . . there cannot be two Parliamentary Governments of equal authority in the Empire. One must be subordinate, subject—if you like to use that word—in a certain sense to the other." If old theories no longer fit in with present practice they must be cast aside and others must be put forward which are based on the facts of the world as it exists to-day. Indeed, since the appearance of the League of Nations, the Austinian doctrine of sovereignty has become quite meaningless, and therefore in an attempt to explain the problem of Dominion status its introduction can only serve to obscure the issues involved.

So far as foreign relations are concerned, Mr. Bruce, Prime Minister of Australia, speaking in the House of Representatives on March 27, 1924, stated the position which is now generally held by all Dominion statesmen. To the Imperial Conference he explained very fully that Australia had become embroiled in the late war because of a treaty guaranteeing the integrity of Belgium, a document of the existence of which probably not half a dozen persons in the Commonwealth had been previously aware. He said that they were determined not to remain in a position where they could become involved in any war in which they

[1] Quoted from speech of Mr. Fielding, *Canadian Hansard*, 2nd sess., 1919, p. 47. Quoted by H. E. Egerton in *British Colonial Policy in XXth Century*, p. 63.

might have to sacrifice everything, without a full knowledge of the circumstances that had brought it upon them.[1]

Before discussing the courses which are open to the Dominions in the future, it will first be necessary to trace briefly the steps which have led to the present situation. Before the War, although they had established their right to sign their own Commercial Treaties and were in the habit of entering into informal Agreements with foreign countries, the Dominions had no international "personality,"[2] but they were already fast attaining the position of partner nations with Great Britain in the Empire. They were completely self-governing within their own territories, and they had already assumed a great deal of the responsibility of their own defence. They had been consulted by the British Government on foreign policy, and in 1912 it had been proposed to them that Dominion Ministers should be appointed to be resident in London, and that these would be summoned to all meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence as regular members. It was further intimated at the time that no important step in foreign relations would be taken without consulting these representatives.[3]

With the outbreak of war development became rapid. The Dominions placed large armies in the field, and played no inconsiderable part in the winning of the victory. The appearance of the Imperial

[1] Reported in *Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire*, p. 568.

[2] *British Year Book of International Law*, 1922–23; Malcolm Lewis, *The International Status of British Self-Governing Dominions*, p. 28.

[3] Sir R. Borden, *Canadian Constitutional Studies*, p. 107.

War Cabinet and the Imperial War Conference, of which more later on, were visible proofs that the Dominions had become partners with the Mother-country, even though certain technical and legal survivals might suggest otherwise. To make assurance doubly sure, the Imperial War Conference of 1917 passed a resolution which asserted this fact. This was further emphasised by the presence of Dominion representatives in the British Empire delegation at Paris in 1919, a practice which was repeated in 1921 at the Washington Disarmament Conference, and both in Paris and at Washington Dominion representatives took a full share in the work of the Conference. Since 1921 nothing has been done to clear away the outstanding questions which have arisen from the new Constitutional position of the Dominions as partner nations. The result is that although almost every statesman in the Empire has repeatedly declared that the Dominions are now partner nations, there is still much to be done before complete substance can be given to that doctrine.

During the same years the Dominions received a quasi-international recognition as well. As has been stated, they had representation at the Peace Conference as regular members of the British Empire delegation, and they also appeared there as small nations. When it came to the signature of the Treaty of Versailles, Sir Robert Borden, on behalf of the Dominions, proposed " that the assent of the King as High Contracting Party to the various Treaties should in respect of the Dominions be expressed by signature of Dominion plenipotentaries, and that the preambles

and other formal parts of the Treaties should be drafted accordingly." This proposal was agreed to and acted upon. Later, the Dominions entered the Assembly of the League of Nations as separate States, and the Prime Minister of Canada obtained a signed Declaration from President Wilson, M. Clemenceau, and Mr. Lloyd George " that upon the true construction of the first and second paragraphs of Article 4, representatives of the self-governing Dominions of the British Empire may be selected or named as members of the Council."

Since the War still further steps have been taken in the direction of International recognition of the Dominions. On May 10, 1920, it was announced in the Canadian Parliament that arrangements had been completed between H.M. Government and the Government of Canada to provide for the appointment of a Minister Plenipotentiary at Washington,[1] to have charge of Canadian affairs, and on June 26, 1924, Mr. Thomas announced in the British Parliament that a similar settlement had been concluded with respect to the Irish Free State.[2]

In the spring of 1922 Canada took still another step

[1] " Accordingly it has been agreed that His Majesty, on advice of his Canadian Ministers, shall appoint a Minister Plenipotentiary who will have charge of Canadian affairs, and will at all times be the ordinary channel of communication with the United States Government in matters of purely Canadian concern, acting upon instructions from, and reporting direct to, the Canadian Government. In the absence of the Ambassador, the Canadian Minister will take charge of the whole Embassy and of the representation of Imperial as well as Canadian interests. He will be accredited by His Majesty to the President with the necessary powers for the purpose."—Borden, *Canadian Constitutional Studies*, p. 125.

[2] *Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire*, p. 474.

in the direction of independent action when she insisted that a Canadian representative, properly accredited by His Majesty as High Contracting Party, should conclude a treaty with the United States respecting the Halibut Fisheries in the North Pacific, on the ground that this question related to Canada and the United States only. Though the British Government finally acceded to this proposal, the American Senate nullified the Canadian intention by ratifying the Treaty on the understanding that "None of the nationals or inhabitants on boats or vessels of any other part of Great Britain shall engage in the Halibut fishery, contrary to the provisions of the Treaty." [1]

The Imperial Conference [2] of 1923 by resolution attempted to define the International position of the Dominions as established by recent developments, and it may be thus summarised :

I. (1) *Negotiation.*

(*a*) No Treaty should be signed by any Government of the Empire without duly considering its possible effects on other parts or on the Empire as a whole.

(*b*) Before negotiations begin the Governments of the Empire should be notified, so that in case they may be interested they can state their views or participate.

(*c*) Where more than one Government is involved, there should be the fullest possible exchange

[1] Malcolm Lewis, *British Year Book of International Law*, 1923–24, p. 168.

[2] Cmd. 1987, pp. 13–15.

of views between Governments, both before and during the negotiations, and in cases where there is an Empire delegation the necessity of preserving a united front should always be kept in mind.

(*d*) Those Governments of the Empire not represented should be kept in touch with the proceedings in respect to any point in which they are likely to be interested.

(2) *Signature.*

(*a*) Bilateral Treaties, affecting one part of the Empire only, should be signed by a representative of that part. The Full Power issued to such representative should indicate the part of the Empire that assumes obligations, and the preamble and text of the Treaty should make its scope clear.

(*b*) Where bilateral Treaties affect more than one part they should be signed by one or more plenipotentiaries on behalf of the Governments concerned.

(*c*) At International Conferences the existing practice of signature by plenipotentaries on behalf of all the Governments represented at the Conference should be continued and "the Full Powers should be in the form employed at Versailles and Washington."

(3) *Ratification.* The existing practice is to be maintained, *i.e.*, where

(*a*) Ratification affects one part only, the Treaty is to be ratified by that part only.

(*b*) Where more than one part is affected the Treaty is to be ratified after consultation between the Governments of the countries, by one or more representative. It is for each Parliament to decide whether Parliamentary approval or Legislation is required before desire for, or concurrence in ratification is admitted by that Government.

II. As regards Agreements between Governments of an administrative or technical character, the existing practice should be continued, but due consideration must always be paid to the interests of other parts of the Empire.

Unless something is done to develop the machinery of consultation, however, it is evident that it will be difficult, if not indeed impossible, to carry out the elaborate procedure here outlined. Further, even though it is agreed that the diplomatic unity of the Empire must be preserved, it seems clear that if all the Dominions followed the example of Canada and Ireland that unity would tend to be merely nominal. The task of differentiating between those questions which are of purely domestic concern to a particular Dominion and those which are Imperial will not prove as easy as it seems. Just as a stone which is thrown into a pool sets up a series of ever-widening concentric circles till the whole pool is affected, so here questions which begin by being purely domestic have the unfortunate habit of developing wider implications, and unless there is a perfect confidence and a real desire to co-operate on both sides it will be quite impossible to determine where such a question ceases

to be purely individual and becomes general. Lastly, the Halibut Treaty proved that foreign nations are inclined to regard the Empire as one, and there are many other examples of this, as Mr. Bruce pointed out in the Australian Parliament. They cannot be blamed if they fail to understand a situation which baffles our own statesmen. At one moment a foreign country will be told " You are dealing with Canada," at another with Australia, at another with Great Britain, or some other Dominion or some combination, and all the time this foreign Power knows that in every case the full strength of the British Empire will support the contracting member or members in any dispute that may arise. It is no matter for surprise, therefore, that in such circumstances foreign Powers seem to see in the present British Empire as it appears on the international stage the cadaverous figure of an international Pooh-bah.

Whatever the present Constitutional and International status of the Dominions may be, it seems abundantly clear from recent events that the obscurity which surrounds it renders some further definition necessary. This can best be illustrated by a few examples. When in 1921 President Harding called the Washington Disarmament Conference he did not invite the Dominions as separate nations but issued one inclusive invitation to the British Empire. The Prime Minister of South Africa appears to have been dissatisfied with this procedure, for he raised the question of separate invitations to the Dominions, and communicated his views to the other Prime Ministers. The latter, however, did not support him, and he

acquiesced in the method adopted by the United States.[1]

In reply to his telegram the Prime Minister of New Zealand stated that, in his opinion, the diplomatic unity of the Empire was of more importance than a paltry victory on the question of Dominion status, and at the same time he pointed out that the Dominions as members of the British Empire delegation would be in a much stronger position than as separate small nations.

The object here is neither to criticise nor to defend the action of General Smuts, but simply to point out the fact that such a contention was raised. The episode proved, if it proved anything, that there was considerable uncertainty in the minds of Dominion statesmen as to the precise status of their country, otherwise there could have been no division of opinion between them.

In the autumn of 1922 a telegram was sent by Mr. Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the Dominions, asking if the latter would be prepared to send military assistance in case hostilities were renewed with Turkey; two of the Dominions—Australia [2] and New Zealand [3]—replied in the affirmative, while

[1] *Round Table*, December 1922, p. 231.

[2] Mr. Hughes cabled in reply that Australia would associate herself with the British Government in any steps to maintain the neutrality of the Straits. . . . Later he stated in Parliament that "Australia would help to defend the Empire but would not go to war in any filibustering expedition."—*Round Table*, December 1922, pp. 183–4.

[3] Within an hour of receiving the telegram the New Zealand Prime Minister despatched to the Imperial Government an unconditional promise to support.—*Round Table*, March 1923, p. 454.

South Africa [1] and Canada [2] stated that before taking action they would require more information to lay before their Parliaments.

This action has since been condemned by statesmen in almost every part of the Empire Mr. Bonar Law, who shortly afterwards became Prime Minister of Great Britain, was emphatic in his condemnations. "To suddenly throw as a bolt from the blue this appeal for help, when not one of the Dominions had the remotest idea that there was any need of it, and when it was well known that their help could not come in time to be of any assistance in a crisis, was to risk, in my opinion, one of the greatest assets in the Empire. It was to take a risk with our Dominions which no wise man would have taken, and which I think was not more foolish than it was wrong." [3]

Speaking in the House of Representatives on July 24, 1923, Mr. Bruce, Prime Minister of Australia, condemned this action as unwise.[4]

[1] "As far as the Union is concerned, very important questions of policy would be involved by any decision of the Government to take part in military operations in Eastern Europe, and the Union Government feel that such a step should not be taken without calling Parliament together. The Union Government venture to express the opinion that the future régime for maintaining the freedom of the Straits should be placed under the League of Nations." —*Official reply of South African Government.* Reported in *Round Table*, December 1922, p. 200.

[2] "It is the view of the Dominion Government that public opinion in Canada would demand the authorisation of Parliament as the necessary preliminary to the despatching of a contingent to participate in the conflict in the Near East. We would welcome the fullest information possible, in order to decide upon the advisability of summoning Parliament."—*Reply of the Canadian Government*, September 16, 1922. *Round Table*, December 1922, p. 176.

[3] John S. Ewart, K.C., *Canada and British Wars*, p. 48.

[4] *Commonwealth Hansard*, July 24, 1923.

The action of the Canadian and South African Governments in asking for further information before taking action was a sufficient indication of their disapproval, a disapproval which has been made clear more than once in the parliamentary debates of those Dominions. Finally, Mr. MacDonald, on June 26, 1924, speaking in the British House of Commons, referred to the unfortunate results to which this telegram had given rise. " . . . There has been a tremendous change in the minds of the Dominions, made by what is known as the Chanak telegram. They will never go back on that. We have evidence of it every week that it marked a decisive change in the intellectual and sympathetic relations between the Dominions and ourselves, and it called for the creation of a machine because to a very large extent confidence had been destroyed." [1]

Again, it is not the intention to apportion blame but simply to point out that, on an important issue of international policy which might have involved war, the Empire was divided. Had the mutual relations of the different parts been clearly known to each other, then either the British Government could never have sent such a telegram, or if it had been sent there could have been no division of opinion.

The Halibut Treaty was another indication of uncertainty—an uncertainty which the misunderstanding over the negotiations and ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne has served to deepen. Briefly, the facts

[1] *Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire*, vol. 5, No. 3, July 1923, p. 415. Ewart, *Canada and British Wars*, makes great play of this telegram, and deduces most surprising results from it.

with regard to the latter seem to be these. On October 22, 1922, the Canadian Government was informed by H.M. Government that invitations had been issued by Great Britain, France, and Italy to different foreign Powers, inviting them to attend a Conference to be held at Lausanne, to conclude the Treaty to end war with Turkey. It was also stated that the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, and the British High Commissioner in Constantinople, Sir Horace Rumbold, would act as British plenipotentiaries, and that the Dominions would be kept informed from time to time of the general lines of policy on which British plenipotentiaries proposed to proceed, and in case of other Treaties arising out of the Peace settlement they would of course be invited to sign a new Treaty and any separate instruments regulating status of the Straits. [1]

The Canadian Government replied that its Parliament must decide the extent to which Canada was bound, both by the proceedings of the Conference and the conditions of any Treaty which might result therefrom. There followed after this a protracted correspondence, in which Canada pointed out that inasmuch as she had not been invited to take part in the Conference, the question of her ratification of the Peace Treaty was one upon which the Canadian Government must pronounce its opinion. To quote Mr. Mackenzie King : " We take the position that not having been invited to the Lausanne Conference, not having been represented there, and not having, for the reasons that I have mentioned, signed the treaty, the

[1] Cmd. 2146, p. 3. Also *Canadian Hansard*, April 2, 1924.

treaty does not impose obligations upon Canada, and that the parts of the Empire upon which it does impose obligations are the only parts which should be expected to sign and ratify. As we did not regard the treaty as imposing obligations upon Canada, we did not feel that it was necessary to submit the treaty to Parliament for its approval, or in its name to signify concurrence in its ratification." [1]

In the course of the correspondence the Canadian Government pointed out that at the Paris Peace Conference and at the Washington Disarmament Conference a regular procedure had been worked out, and that this procedure was in harmony with the Imperial Conference Resolution 1923, respecting the ratification of Treaties, and that it had not been observed in this particular instance by the British Government. Here again we are only concerned to point out that in the existing position which Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Hughes found so satisfactory in the Imperial Conference of 1921, this dispute could arise.

Certain conclusions, however, are obvious. As Mr. MacDonald pointed out to the British Parliament, there was apparently more politeness than definiteness in the opening moves of the game, and the Canadian Prime Minister would have probably been on safer ground if he had pressed for Canadian representation at Lausanne. As far as the British Government is concerned, it appears that the Foreign Office at least was not particularly anxious to have Canadian plenipotentiaries. Either the term "Great Britain" was used purposely to exclude the Dominions, or the fact

[1] *Canadian Hansard*, April 2, 1924, p. 990.

that it was used indicated that British Ministers were still thinking in terms of the past. This view would appear to be supported by the language employed by Lord Curzon, for, in speaking in the House of Lords on Irish representation at Washington on June 25, 1924, he said : " The proposal that Canada should appoint a Minister at Washington was viewed with great apprehension at the Foreign Office, and it was only with extreme reluctance that the Foreign Office acquiesced in it." [1]

It need scarcely be mentioned that this expressed a point of view with which the Dominions find it impossible to agree, and the Foreign Office must come to recognise itself not as the Foreign Office of Great Britain only, but of the whole Empire.

This dispute brought out some rather surprising opinions from certain public men in Great Britain, opinions which are calculated to do a considerable amount of harm. Thus, for example, one distinguished member of Parliament in a letter to *The Times* stated : " The Dominions in regard to the Lausanne Treaty appear to have been treated with complete consideration and courtesy. They were asked to consent—in itself a courtesy—to the appointing of the British Foreign Secretary and Sir Horace Rumbold as the representatives of the Empire at Lausanne, and they consented." [2]

The Dominions were asked if, provided there were a renewal of hostilities with Turkey, they would be

[1] *Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire*, vol. 5, No. 3, July 1923, p. 477.

[2] Letter of Sir John Marriott, *The Times*, April 5, 1924.

prepared to assist Great Britain with a military force, but they were not invited to be present at the Conference which was called to settle outstanding difficulties with that country and to make peace. It is difficult to see how this can be regarded as courteous treatment. Further, the suggestion that the invitation to the Dominions was not issued because certain foreign Powers objected to the British Empire being given a disproportionate number of representatives should have no weight. No Power can ignore the fact that the Dominions are now members of the League of Nations, that they took an active part in the Peace Conference, that, in the words of Mr. Mackenzie King, " at Genoa and at The Hague we were represented—that we had been invited to be present at these Conferences, and, considering their nature, we felt it would perhaps be not only of interest and benefit to ourselves, but also to others if we were represented there." [1]

If the procedure followed at Washington had been adopted at Lausanne, there need never have been any difficulties, providing, of course, that the Imperial representatives were prepared to insist on their rights, no matter what foreign nations might say. Of the seven British representatives present at the Disarmament Conference, four represented the Dominions and three the Empire as a whole, all matters were discussed exhaustively, but only one vote was cast,[2] and a similar procedure was adopted at the Inter-Allied Conference on the Dawes report :

[1] *Canadian Hansard*, June 9, 1924, p. 3045.
[2] *Round Table*, March 1922, pp. 220–230.

"It has been settled that representatives of any of the Dominions so desiring, and of India, shall become members of the British Empire delegation at the Conference on the panel system, and it has also been arranged for the representatives so appointed to be present at the meetings of the Conference on days when it is not their turn to sit as members of the British Empire delegation. This will ensure that they are fully acquainted with all that goes on in the Conference. The plan adopted is a special one for this particular Conference, and is not to be regarded or quoted as a precedent." [1]

These crises have all arisen because for various reasons the statesmen of the Empire have grown singularly timid about touching the Constitution. In the debates on the agenda of the Imperial Conference of 1923, this point came up in several Parliaments. The Prime Minister of Canada in reply to a question as to the attitude he proposed to assume on the subject of a Constitutional Conference, stated that he was still of the opinion expressed in his own resolution of two years before, that "This House, while recognising the propriety of Canada being represented at any Imperial Conference or Conference of the Prime Ministers of the Empire that may be called, desires to record its opinion that at the coming Conference no steps should be taken in any way involving any change in the relations of Canada to other parts of the Empire." [2]

[1] *Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire*, vol. 5, No. 3, July 1924, p. 499.

[2] *Canadian Hansard*, June 29, 1923; *Commonwealth Hansard*, July 27, 1923; *New Zealand Hansard*, July 5, 1923.

Yet Mr. Bruce and Mr. Massey both expressed their dissatisfaction with the existing conditions of the Dominions in relation to consultation on foreign policy and defence. Like a nervous man with a bad tooth, the different members of the Commonwealth complain about their sufferings, but prefer to go on as they are rather than face an operation which would end the agony. So far the Empire has weathered the storms which have arisen, but it is unwise to leave everything to chance and good-will, for the machine is important. Some time circumstances will not be so favourable, and for lack of proper machinery the Empire will be wrecked. In the present chaotic state of the world this is a catastrophe which is too serious to be permitted to occur merely through lack of courage and initiative. Fortunately, the British Government has at last realised the seriousness of the situation, for on June 6, 1924, Mr. MacDonald announced in Parliament that his Government proposed to call together a Committee of experts which would examine the whole problem and decide what steps should be taken to set up a satisfactory form of machinery which, while making the necessary co-operative effort possible, would allow for that instantaneous action which from time to time is necessary in foreign affairs.[1]

[1] *Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire*, vol. 5, No. 3, p. 414. It is a matter for regret that this proposal was not favourably received by the Dominions, and the subject has been shelved. See Cmd. 2301.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FUTURE STATUS OF THE DOMINIONS

SINCE, then, the present position is far from satisfactory, the Dominions must decide sooner or later, and the sooner the better, the course which they propose to follow in the future. For all of them there are two possible alternatives—independence, or partnership within the Empire, and for Canada, as Mr. Mackenzie King suggests, there is a third course —annexation to the United States.

It is proposed now to consider each of these alternatives. The Autonomists, as they call themselves, represent the ultra-Nationalist point of view, and though small in numbers they are very vocal. They believe the time has now come when the second British Empire must disintegrate. This should be done in a perfectly friendly way, so that, unlike the American Revolution, it should leave no bitter memories behind. The Dominions are now fully grown nations, and they should no longer be burdened by the obligations and commitments of the United Kingdom, for England's wars are not their wars. "Canada is situated in a North American Continent, and her policy ought to be based upon that indisputable fact. She ought to abstain from engulfment in the affairs,

now more than ever perturbed, of Europe and the Near East. She ought to give no pledges with regard to future action." [1] By separation from the Empire the Dominions could devote all their energies to their own domestic affairs, and would escape the contamination of foreign countries, and the stupid bickerings of less enlightened peoples. " With their strifes and their hatreds (the nations of Europe) Canada must keep herself unassociated. They must learn by heavy and still heavier experience that wars breed wars, and not, as they were told, a thousand years of peace. They must learn to understand each other, to appreciate one another, even to sympathise with one another. Canada is not European, she is North American ; let her pursue a policy based upon that fact." [2]

Again, it is sometimes urged by the more sensitive nationalists that as members of the Empire the Dominions must always be in a subordinate position, and must look to the representatives of Great Britain for assistance abroad, while at home even their constitutions are dependent upon the whims of the British Parliament.[3]

A Canadian poet has expressed the point of view of this party thus :

> " How long the ignoble sloth, how long
> The trust in greatness not thine own ?
> Surely the lion's brood is strong
> To face the world alone ! "

[1] Ewart, *Canada and British Wars*, p. 88.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

[3] *Commonwealth Hansard*, July 27, 1923; *Canadian Hansard*, June 29, 1923 ; *ibid.*, March 20, 1924.

Against this view it should be pointed out that independence would not mean the immunity of the Dominions from foreign complications. It would be far truer to say not that the Dominions are situated in North America, Africa, or any other continent, but that they are situated in the world. "Let them base their policy upon that indisputable fact." To-day the world is no longer a single parish—it is a single organism, an organism so complex and so sensitive that disease in any one part is liable to spread throughout the whole body and destroy it. The experience of the United States in the late war was no isolated phenomenon, but an example of what must always be expected in the future. That country was drawn into a struggle with which at the outset she had apparently no concern, simply because she is situated not only in the North American Continent, but in the world. The causes of war then, no matter how remote they may appear to be, are the vital concerns of all civilised States, and for Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, as for Great Britain, the policy of splendid and self-righteous isolation is impossible; whether within the Empire or outside of it these nations must help to bear the burden of civilisation, and nothing can relieve them from that task. Indeed, as members of the League of Nations they are already definitely committed to a variety of obligations from which no declaration of independence can free them. Sir Robert Borden put this clearly when he said: "We cannot separate ourselves from world-wide conditions. No Monroe Doctrine or self-denying ordinance can roll back the tide of events that surges

through the years. Every nation has become the neighbour of every other. The people of other Continents sit at our threshold." [1]

The theory that there is something humiliating in the position of the Dominions as members of the British Commonwealth is almost childish. Membership of any group must impose some restrictions upon individuals, but in this case the Dominions must decide whether those restrictions outweigh the privileges which membership entails. Outstanding difficulties about the extra-territorial jurisdiction of Dominion Law—the imperfect control of the Dominions over the amendment of their Constitutions, and the objections to the present position of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, can all easily be settled. The Dominions have the power in their own hands to clear up these questions, but they must take the initiative themselves. The only thing required for their settlement is the general wish on the part of the Dominions, and, as Sir Robert Borden says, "Good sense and cordial understanding on both sides."

Before declaring their independence the Dominions might, however, well consider the implication of that act, since the privilege of being regarded as Sovereign Powers would carry with it many burdens, from which they are at present free. They would be called upon to bear the full cost of their own defence, and since each of them would probably have its own defence policy, there would be undoubtedly a great deal of duplication which is now avoided. At the same time

[1] Borden, *Constitutional Studies*, Lecture 3, p. 140.

each of them would be obliged to develop and maintain costly Diplomatic Services, and all of this simply in order to be classed as small nations, and therefore of little account in the Councils of the World. Their actual international influence would certainly be less than it is at present, for under any circumstances their total populations are still small, and they would no longer, as they do at present, be able to speak with the weight of the whole British Commonwealth behind them. Apparently, therefore, the only result would be an increase in the number of "nasty little nations," as a well-known Canadian writer has expressed it—a commodity with which the world-market is already overstocked.

To sum up, then, it appears that independence, however attractive it may be superficially, would mean for the Dominions an increase in their burdens and a loss of prestige. The assumptions of its champions that Great Britain, like some bellicose old crone, cannot get rid of her bad habits, and that independence would mean escape from her thraldom and international obligations of all kinds, are false. Independence after all is in itself a purely negative conception and cannot therefore be a satisfactory goal for any nation. It can only be justified when it means escape from oppression, such, for example, as was the case of Italy in the nineteenth century. It is clear, however, that this does not apply to the Dominions, and that independence will mean, not escape from intolerable burdens, but the exact reverse. Fortunately, this is the opinion of most leading Dominion statesmen, as the following quotations suggest: "I hope

the day will never come when I will deny that Canada has some responsibility to other parts of the British Empire as well as to herself." [1] "If Canada is to play an honourable part in the work of the world, she must remain an integral and active part of the Commonwealth," [2] and "We are part of the Empire, and while we remain so we cannot avoid the obligations which it involves." [3]

Since, then, independence is ruled out of court, what of the other alternative? Here again it appears there are two possible courses, Imperial Federation or a further development of the system suggested by the policy adopted during the War. On paper, Imperial Federation is the only completely satisfactory plan yet put forward.[4] Its advocates contend that a division should be made in the powers which the British Parliament now administers, between those which are domestic and those which are Imperial. The latter should be transferred to an Imperial Parliament representing the whole Empire, having its own administrative services, its own Cabinet, and its own place of meeting. This Parliament would be concerned only with the administration of Imperial foreign policy, Imperial defence, the government of Dependencies, and Imperial taxation sufficient to maintain these services. The Federalists frankly acknowledge that this will entail considerable sacrifices, both on the part of Great Britain and the

[1] Mr. Mackenzie King, *Canadian Hansard*, vol. 59, No. 14, p. 546.
[2] Mr. Meighen, quoted in *Round Table*, June 1923.
[3] Mr. Bruce, *Commonwealth Hansard*, July 24, 1923.
[4] *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, by Lionel Curtis.

Dominions, and indeed it is clear that if the British Empire is to continue, its members must accept sacrifice of some sort as inevitable.

With all its advantages, however, Imperial Federation is for the present at least impossible. Almost every Dominion statesman has condemned it, usually on the ground that it would destroy Dominion nationalism, and threaten their internal autonomy. "We have more to fear from the rashness and impetuosity of some people who have given a great deal of time and trouble to this subject than from any desire on the part of the British people to go slowly. . . . I am utterly opposed to any alteration which would allow our finances to be dealt with by a Parliament sitting outside of this country." [1]

The Dominions also fear that an Imperial Parliament might adopt a policy to which individually they might be opposed, but might not be strong enough to make their opinions carry.

In 1917 the Canadian Conservative party repudiated the Federal scheme, and in the course of the next two years the other two parties followed its example. About the same time General Smuts was conducting an anti-Imperial Federation campaign in England. None of the parties in Great Britain were enthusiastically in favour of the scheme, and at least one of them was definitely opposed. In Australia the scheme was even less popular, and a reply three-quarters of a century ago to a similar question is a concise statement of the Dominion point of view. "I would rather be

[1] Speech of Mr. Massey in New Zealand Parliament, quoted in Egerton, *British Colonial Policy in the XXth Century*, p. 71.

governed by a Nero on the spot than by a committee of archangels in Downing Street." [1]

It follows, therefore, that if the Dominions propose to remain within the Empire, they have only one course open to them—they must develop the system of co-operation and consolidation which worked so well during the War and at the Peace Conference; but before pointing out the difficulties of that system as it at present exists, it is advisable to sketch its growth.

Between 1887 and 1907 there took place in London a series of Colonial Conferences in which British and Overseas representatives discussed questions of common interest, such as the Pacific Cable, the All-Red Line and Imperial Preference, and their deliberations were presided over by the contemporary Secretary of State for the Colonies.

In 1897 and again in 1902 the question of Imperial Federation was mooted by the Home Government, but rejected by the Overseas representatives. Finally, in 1907, a compromise between the demand for an Imperial Parliament and that for an informal Conference was arrived at, and the name "Imperial Conference" was adopted in place of "Colonial Conference." At the same time, the Secretary of State for the Colonies was replaced as President by the British Prime Minister. This Conference passed a resolution which laid down the lines of future procedure. "It will be to the advantage of the Empire if a Conference to be called 'The Imperial Conference' is held every four years, at which questions of common interest may

[1] Duncan Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 220.

be discussed and considered as between His Majesty's Government and the Governments of his self-governing Dominions beyond seas. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom will be *ex-officio* President, and the Prime Ministers of the self-governing Dominions *ex-officio* members of the Conference, and will take the chair in the absence of the President. He will arrange and summon Imperial Conferences in consultation and communication with the Prime Ministers of the Dominions. Such other Ministers as the respective Governments may appoint will also be members of the Conference, it being understood that, except by special permission of the Conference, each discussion will be conducted by not more than two representatives from each Government, and that each Government will have not more than one vote." [1]

In 1911 the question of an Imperial Council was mooted by Sir Joseph Ward, but rejected both by the other Dominions and by Great Britain. On that occasion Mr. Asquith made it clear that the British Government had then no intention of admitting the Dominions to a share in foreign policy, even though a large number of members of Parliament had shortly before sent him a memorial to that effect.[2]

In the following year the Imperial Government

[1] Quoted from *Proceedings of the Imperial Conference*, 1907, in Duncan Hall's *British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 115.

[2] "We, the undersigned members of Parliament representing various political parties, are of opinion that the time has arrived to take practical steps to associate the Overseas Dominions in a more practical manner with the conduct of Imperial affairs, if possible by means of an established Representative Council of an advisory character in touch with opinion throughout the Empire."—*Minutes of the Imperial Conference*, 1911, Cd. 5745, p. 71.

proposed an alternative scheme to that of the Imperial Council. Pending a final settlement of the question of Dominion participation in foreign policy, it urged that the Dominions should appoint Ministers to be resident in London, and these should be summoned to the meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence as regular members. At the same time it was stated that no important step in foreign policy would be taken without first consulting these Dominion representatives.[1] A similar offer was made in 1918.

During the War the necessity for almost constant communication between the Governments of the Empire led to rapid development in the consultative system. In 1915 the Canadian Prime Minister, who was then in London, attended a full meeting of the British Cabinet, and this may be an important precedent for the future.[2] Further, as Sir Robert Borden points out in his "Canadian Constitutional Studies," Canada virtually had a resident Minister in London throughout the War, either in the person of her High Commissioner or in that of her Minister of Overseas Forces.

In 1917 the necessity for united action became more than ever urgent. In addition to the two Cabinets already in existence in London, the plenary Cabinet of twenty-two which carried on the regular business of the country, and the War Cabinet, or "Big Five," which was primarily concerned with the prosecution of the War as it affected the United Kingdom, there now came into existence a third Cabinet—"The

[1] Borden, *Canadian Constitutional Studies*, pp. 107 and 109.
[2] Keith, *Imperial Unity and the Dominions*, p. 545.

Imperial War Cabinet." [1] This body was made up of the Prime Ministers of the Empire, with one or two additional members, and met for deliberation and discussion on Imperial War policy. As Sir Robert Borden pointed out it was a Cabinet of Cabinets, each member reporting back and answerable to his own Government. The Prime Ministers of the Empire met there " for purposes of co-operation and united action, but that action can only be taken with the sanction and authority of the representatives of the various nations of the Empire, assembled in their own Parliaments." [2]

At the same time that the Imperial War Cabinet was meeting, the Imperial Conference now styled " The Imperial War Conference," was at work, and an important resolution was passed. It was decided in 1917 that it was not then advisable to enter upon a Constitutional discussion, and the Conference contented itself with resolving: " The Imperial War Conference are of the opinion that the readjustment of the constitutional relations of the component parts of the Empire is too important and intricate a subject to be dealt with during the War, and that it should form the subject of a special Imperial Conference to be summoned as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities. They deem it their duty, however, to place on record their view that any such readjustment, while thoroughly preserving all existing powers of self-government and complete control of domestic affairs,

[1] Duncan Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 171.

[2] Sir R. Borden, quoted in Egerton, *British Colonial Policy in the XXth Century*, p. 153.

should be based upon a full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth and of India as an important portion of the same ; should recognise the right of the Dominions and India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations, and should provide effective arrangements for continuous consultation in all important matters of common Imperial concern, and for such necessary concerted action, founded upon consultation, as the several Governments may determine." [1]

In the following year the Imperial War Conference made still further advances, and these were confirmed by the Imperial War Cabinet. The Prime Ministers of the Dominions claimed the right of direct access to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom without the mediation of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and a reciprocal right was asserted by the British Prime Minister. Further, in order to provide for the necessary continuity of consultation the Dominion Prime Ministers asserted their right to nominate representatives who in their absence should be called to all the meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet.[2]

Thus, before the end of the War, new machinery had been created, the existing position was declared to be unsatisfactory, and a Constitutional Conference had been resolved upon. The Colonial Office was tending rapidly to lose its old position, and to become a sort of clearing-house for Imperial questions, as far as the Dominions were concerned. The principle of partnership of the Dominions and India with Great

[1] *Proceedings of the Imperial War Conference*, 1917, Cd. 8566, p. 61.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1918, Cd. 9177, p. 165 note.

Britain had been firmly established, not only as a result of their great military efforts during the War, but also by specific Imperial Conference resolutions. The British Empire delegation which went to Paris in 1919 was virtually the Imperial War Cabinet under another name, meeting for a special purpose. Dominion representatives, as the records show, played no inconsiderable part in the Peace negotiations, and each step was carefully considered by the whole delegation before action was taken. At that time, and since then, many people have seen in this new machinery the possibility of a satisfactory solution of the Imperial problem in relation to foreign affairs. Others have been contemptuous for various reasons, but it should be pointed out that this machinery is confessedly far from perfect, and that if it is to be worked successfully it must be developed further.

By 1921 it appears a reaction had taken place both in the Dominions and the Mother-country. The old fears about Dominion commitments and the old suspicions reappeared, so that when the proposal for a Constitutional Conference came up, the Prime Ministers resolved to do nothing. "Consultation, to which the Prime Ministers attach no less importance than the Imperial War Conference of 1917, can only be secured by substantial improvements in the communications of the component parts of the Empire. Having regard to the constitutional developments since 1917, no advantage is to be gained by holding a Constitutional Conference." [1]

[1] *Proceedings of the Conference of Prime Ministers*, 1921, Cmd. 1474, p. 9.

It was further stated that the Imperial Conference should attempt to meet annually, and that the existing practice of direct communication between the United Kingdom and the Dominions should be maintained. At the same time, Dominion Prime Ministers reasserted their claim to appoint Cabinet Ministers to represent them in London.

To the uninitiated it is difficult to see how the developments which had taken place since 1917 had made a Constitutional Conference unnecessary, and, in fact, the exact contrary would seem to be the case. Since 1917 the Dominions had acquired a quasi-international standing, the effect of which was to make their position in the Empire more anomalous than ever, but for Ministers embarrassed by political opponents, and distracted by domestic reconstruction problems, the course adopted was, as far as they were concerned, if not courageous, at least safe.

The Imperial Conference of 1923 followed the example set two years before. Two of the Prime Ministers came with instructions from their Parliaments not to be bound by Imperial commitments and not to give pledges.[1] The result was that this Conference did nothing to clear up the existing muddle, except, as has been seen, to pass a resolution on treaty-making powers, confirming the practice which had grown up within recent years.

No one can say that the present position of the consultative system is satisfactory. Between the Imperial Conferences the Dominions have little or no

[1] *Canadian Hansard*, June 29, 1923; *Commonwealth Hansard*, July 1923.

share in foreign policy, for although they are in constant communication with the United Kingdom, very often the despatches are received long after the affair to which they refer has been settled. Speaking in the Australian Parliament on July 24, 1923, Mr. Bruce stated that in his opinion the system of continuous consultation recommended by the 1921 Conference had not worked in a satisfactory way.[1] Mr. Massey stated that he was still in favour of some kind of Empire Council which should be able to give its undivided attention to Imperial affairs. The difficulties over the signing of the Lausanne Treaty is one example of many which shows that the existing system has been far from successful in Canada. Lastly, Mr. Lloyd George seems to share this dissatisfaction. "Communications by cable are not a means by which you can have real consultation, because you may have a particular point of view, and may alter it after hearing what has been said on the other side."[2]

In conclusion, then, the present muddle must be cleared up. Undoubtedly the fear of cut-and-dried schemes which is so prevalent both in Great Britain

[1] *Commonwealth Hansard*, July 24, 1923.

[2] Quoted by Mr. Shaw, *Canadian Hansard*, June 29, 1923, who also quotes Lord Milner: "Experience has shown that the consultation which is necessary, in order to keep the different interests of the Empire in line, cannot be properly effected by telegrams and despatches between half a dozen different Governments."

"Every day a new situation arises or may arise. How is it to be dealt with? We shall be scattered to the four quarters of the earth. How are the Dominions to have an effective voice on foreign policy, when, as things stand, they can only be told after things have been done and are not consulted beforehand?"—Mr. Hughes, *Proceedings of the Conference of Prime Ministers*, 1921, Cmd. 1474, p. 19.

and the Dominions is healthy, for it is not the tradition of the British Empire to force human material into a set mould ; but the present widespread disinclination for discussions of any sort on the subject is little short of pathological, and stagnation should not be mistaken for justifiable caution. As things are, every time a crisis arises in foreign affairs, or whenever a Dominion decides to take an independent course, as in the Halibut Treaty, since no one is sure what the present situation is, friction tends to be created. So far, goodwill and a general desire to co-operate have prevented these crises from developing, but some day, unless something is done, some member of the Commonwealth will decide that these recurring strains and misunderstandings are unbearable. Then, largely because of a lack of courage on the part of Imperial statesmen, the Empire will disintegrate, and with it will disappear one of the greatest bulwarks of civilisation. It is not suggested here that everything can be settled by one Conference, and it is frankly acknowledged that the difficulties which beset Imperial statesmen are tremendous, but even though the final settlement might not be reached for many years to come, surely it is time to throw off the post-war inertia and begin to do something.

If the consultative system is to be made satisfactory, it is clear that certain obstacles must be removed. In the first place, there appears to be a considerable amount of obscurity with respect to the terminology employed in the communications between Governments. In the Lausanne negotiations with Canada, a good deal of difficulty arose, owing to the fact that the

term "Great Britain" meant different things to the different Governments.[1] In order to obviate any such misunderstanding in the future, the term "Great Britain" or the term "British Empire" must be accepted by all.

In the second place, it is clear that the Foreign Office has not yet been brought into line with the great changes which have taken place, and it still tends to regard itself as the Foreign Office of the United Kingdom rather than the Foreign Office of the Empire as a whole. It is probably true that the Dominions, for their part, tend to neglect Europe in thinking of foreign affairs, but the British Government, on its side, appears to stress Europe and neglect the rest of the world. In a letter to *The Times* a Canadian professor expressed the point of view which is generally held overseas. "There is no sentiment in Canada worthy of the smallest consideration which looks towards independence or towards incorporation in the United States . . . the absence, however, of such sentiment does not mean that Canada is going to play second fiddle to the British Foreign Office."[2] Not only should the Foreign Office be made more democratic in its methods, but there might be much advantage in admitting more candidates from the Dominions to the Diplomatic Corps.

Thirdly, though the published proceedings of the Imperial Conference of 1923 represented a marked advance on the meagre publication of 1921, much still remains to be done. In the Reports either there should be a full account given, or if this is impossible,

[1] *Canadian Hansard*, Speech of Mr. Mackenzie King, June 9, 1924.
[2] *The Times*, August 1, 1924, Letter from Professor Kennedy.

as may well happen, those which are given should not convey a false impression. It appears that this is the case in the Report of 1923, since, while it is implied that the Dominion Prime Ministers were satisfied with the existing conduct of foreign policy, Mr. Mackenzie King stated in the Canadian Parliament that he registered his objection to the methods employed at Lausanne.[1] " In the presence of the Prime Ministers of the other Dominions and the members of the British Government, I made it clear that because we were not represented, and because we had no part in the Conference, this Government did not feel that it could bring into the House a Treaty negotiated as this Treaty had been negotiated, and expect to have the approval of Parliament and the obligations it carried with it." It is vital that these sins of omission should be avoided in the future.

Again, the debate in the Canadian House of Commons on June 9, 1924, almost reached the stage of high comedy on several occasions, owing to the fact that both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition were constantly referring to certain mysterious documents which both of them had seen, but whose contents they were not authorised to divulge. At the same time, it was evident to all that these documents explained that the Dominions had not been invited to Lausanne because of certain objections which the French Government had raised. This absurd secrecy about such matters is not only harmful in itself, but it indicates a lack of conviction which, if it continues, will

[1] *Imperial Conference* 1923, *Summary of Proceedings*, Cmd. 1987, pp. 11 and 12. *Canadian Hansard*, June 9, 1924, p. 3046.

make a cordial understanding between the Mother-country and the Dominions difficult. The British Empire differs from every other State in the world, and there is no use attempting to conceal that fact. The sooner foreign nations come to realise this the better not only for themselves but for us.

The Imperial Conference should meet every two years, and there might be some advantage in holding it from time to time in different Dominion capitals. The suggestion that it should contain representatives of the Oppositions as well as the Governments of the Empire, has very much to commend it, and though this has been criticised on the ground that it would turn the Conference into a menagerie, it may well be pointed out that even a menagerie from which some policy emerges is preferable to a box of marionettes in which nothing can be done because each puppet is attached to invisible springs controlled by invisible and hostile hands outside. Even if it is found impossible to give the Oppositions places at the Conference Board, their opinions should be known and given all due consideration, in order that the fiasco of 1923 shall not occur again.

There is much to be said for the development of an inter-Imperial Diplomatic Service. There would then be present at each capital of the Empire diplomatic representatives from all the other parts, whose task it would be to keep their country in touch with the general movements of public opinion and political affairs. This would serve to bring the Dominions themselves into closer touch with each other than they are at present, which is in itself a very important

consideration, and also it would help to establish direct contacts between the Dominions and India. As will be shown later on, unless very serious risks are to be taken, some such arrangement is absolutely essential.

The representatives in London should be fully qualified Ministers of Cabinet standing, and there must be an end of the stupid cry which has been heard so much "that the Dominions cannot afford to waste a Cabinet Minister in London." This is a small price to pay in comparison with the costs of independence. These Ministers would be regular members of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, a body whose function would be to carry out a foreign policy agreed upon by the Imperial Conference and approved of by the Parliaments of the Empire. Much good might result from Mr. Bruce's suggestion that a permanent Imperial Conference secretariat should come into existence, responsible not to the British Government nor to any British department, but to the whole of the self-governing parts of the Empire.[1]

In dealing with foreign nations all are agreed that the diplomatic unity of the Empire must be maintained. But in doing this certain principles must be observed. Of these perhaps the most important is that he who pays the piper calls the tune; in other words, since at the present time and for many years to come the United Kingdom will bear the lion's share of Imperial burdens, her voice must naturally carry most weight in the Councils of the Empire. Further, if reality is to be given to this theory of

[1] Speech of Mr. Bruce, summarised in the *Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire*, No. 3, July 1924, p. 567.

diplomatic unity, everything must be done to ensure complete confidence, and the Dominions must be sparing in their insistence upon separate diplomatic representation. They must realise that they cannot eat their cake and have it,[1] and that it is impossible for them, while they remain within the Empire, to decide that certain Treaties are or are not binding upon them.[2] Of course they will always have the right to decide in case of war what action in the shape of military assistance they propose to take, but in such a war Imperial citizenship is incompatible with neutrality.

Provided these conditions are observed it is a matter of slight importance as to how a particular Treaty is signed. It is probable that the procedure followed at the Disarmament Conference at Washington which was reproduced in a modified way at the London Conference may be further developed so as to give general satisfaction, but this is a question which a special Imperial Conference could decide.

If the Dominions are to be listened to in the world they must regularise their position as regards defence, and assume their just share of the Imperial burdens which citizenship of the Empire entails, and it must be pointed out again that these burdens are far less onerous than those of independence. But even with the most perfect machinery that statesmanship can

[1] *Canadian Hansard*, June 9, 1924.

[2] "To all foreign nations the British Empire is one and indivisible, and it was useless for them to hope that in the event of hostilities arising as a result of misguided British foreign policy, the Australian people could stand aside and say that they had no part in the quarrel."—*Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire*, vol. 5, No. 3, July 1924, p. 568.

devise, unless there is a genuine feeling among the peoples of the Empire that the Empire is worth while, and unless they are prepared to accept the limitations which its citizenship imposes upon them, it cannot endure. If it dissolves, the Dominions will go their separate ways, mastered by the spirit of a self-centred nationalism, and in view of what that creed has meant for the world when followed as an end in itself, the possibilities of lasting peace among the nations will become remote.

The British group can do more than any other political system in the world to solve the problems of international and inter-racial co-operation, and thus to prepare the way for the time when men will think of themselves, not as citizens of any country, or of any empire, but of the world. It is far wiser for the Dominions to throw off their provincialism, to act upon their responsibilities and to cease proclaiming their rights. In the achievement of the great task that Providence has imposed upon them, no lesser loyalties, no matter how cherished they may be, should be allowed to stand in the way. The British Empire differs from all the empires that have ever existed. It is the world's greatest laboratory, where, under the most favourable conditions possible, important political experiments may be tried, experiments upon whose success or failure will, to a considerable extent, depend the fate of civilisation and the course of history. To share in such a task with such an end in view is surely a grander destiny for any country than the tawdry glamour of Nationalism or the glittering negations of Independence.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PRINCIPLE OF TRUSTEESHIP

It is now proposed to sketch briefly the system of Trusteeship which has been developed by Great Britain in her tropical possessions. It has already been stated that this principle is of much more recent growth in the Empire than the principle of self-government. In general it may be said that down to the end of the eighteenth century the British people did not feel that they were in any way responsible for the happiness and well-being of native races. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century for a variety of reasons a great change took place, and this change found eloquent expression in the speeches of Burke and Pitt and the work of Wilberforce. In the nineteenth century British civil servants, teachers, missionaries, and doctors applied this principle in various parts of the world. It is not proposed here to trace its history, but simply to point out that it was developed by the British Empire and has now received general acceptance by being embodied in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.[1]

[1] *Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.* "To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them, and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to

For the present purpose it may be assumed that the dependent Empire falls into three distinct groups —Malaya, the tropical African Colonies and Protectorates, and the West Indies. There are, in addition to Hong Kong and Ceylon, a number of small islands scattered over the seven seas, but these need not detain us here.

In Malaya the task of the British administrator has not been an easy one. As Sir Frank Swettenham points out, the British representative was expected, with the least possible interference with native institutions, to be the medium by which civilisation and progress were introduced. In the early days he was often called upon to be his own policeman, his own medical adviser, his own teacher, engineer, surveyor, and a variety of other persons rolled into one. His work was carried on in a Turkish-bath atmosphere which made effort of any sort difficult.[1]

When the British first arrived there already existed organised communities ruled over by native Sultans.

stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation, and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

"The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who, by reason of their resources, their experience, or their geographical position, can best undertake this responsibility and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.

"The character of the Mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions, and other similar circumstances. Etc., etc."

[1] Sir Frank Swettenham, *British Malaya*, pp. 241, 242.

The task of the British Administrator has been, while preserving these native institutions and developing them, to civilise the country.[1] The customs and laws of these people enshrined many barbaric practices which were repugnant to humanity and which it was the duty of the Administrator tactfully to remove. All usages and customs other than these however were preserved, and the native rulers were supplied with expert advice on every conceivable subject, whether it was the construction of a railway or the stamping out of some terrible disease.

The people of Malaya, with all their charm, could not be described as energetic, and in fact it is difficult to expect such a thing considering their climate. The result was that although their country is one of the wealthiest in the world in natural resources it remained practically untouched, and the natives by themselves would never have turned any of its vast resources to the use of man. The people were poor, and thus in addition to developing the country, the

[1] Some indication of what was meant by this may be seen in the instructions issued by the Colonial Office, June 1, 1876. Sir Frank Swettenham, *British Malaya*, pp. 216, 217: "You will observe that in continuing the Residential system, Her Majesty's Government define the functions of the Resident to be the giving of influential and responsible advice to the ruler, a position the duties of which are well understood in the East. The Residents are not to interfere more frequently or to greater extent than is necessary with the minor details of government; but their special objects should be, the maintenance of peace and law, the initiation of a sound system of taxation, with the consequent development of the resources of the country, and the supervision of the collection of the revenue, so as to ensure the receipt of funds necessary to carry out the principal engagements of the Government, and to pay for the cost of the British officers, and whatever establishments may be necessary to support them."

British Administration had to make life and property secure, in order that capital might be attracted. Further, as the natives themselves were disinclined to strenuous labour, it was necessary for the Government to bring in Chinese and Indian indentured workers. This is not the place to give an account of the kaleidoscopic development of Malaya. It advanced so rapidly after the '70's that unless one was constantly travelling through the country one's knowledge would in the course of a year or two become useless. Roads, railways, canals, public buildings, irrigation works, schools appeared almost as if by magic and transformed the country.

The task of the British official in Africa has, if anything, been more difficult. The country to be administered is of course vaster, and the population is more backward. The native African is a child, with most of the defects and many of the charms of a child, and it is just as absurd to expect him to govern himself in a civilised way as it would be to expect children to discharge all the responsibilities of grown-up people. Many well-meaning white people have committed terrible blunders in Africa because they assumed that, since all men are brothers in the sight of God, they are therefore equally capable of rational thinking and acting. It has been said of the African: "The negro race has never developed a civilisation, a culture or a creed of its own, or founded a stone city or built a ship or exercised the smallest influence over people not black." [1]

[1] Sir Frederick Lugard, *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, p. 82 (quotation from Mr. Meredith Townsend).

Although the Nile Valley was the cradle of one of the earliest civilisations, the Continent of Africa remained the unknown Dark Continent well into living memory, and its peoples in the words of Article 22 of the League of Nations are not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, so that the development and well-being of these peoples form a sacred trust for humanity.

The problem in Africa differs widely both from the problem in India and even from that in Malaya. India is a civilised country with ancient traditions and ancient religions. Africa, while it has institutions of its own, has no civilisation behind it. To extend to its people, as has been suggested by some, a system like Dyarchy would be almost as absurd as to give them complete self-government. They have behind them no traditions of ordered government, though effective barbarous governments existed in various places, *e.g.* Uganda, and the spirit of compromise which is so essential for the working of such a system is alien to their nature.

As a matter of fact, it is now generally recognised that no new government is necessary for them, since the institutions in existence, if developed, are admirably adapted to their needs, provided they are cleansed of the taint of barbarism. It seems a safe assumption that, if this can be done, the sort of government which the Africans have elaborated for themselves will be more suited to their character than any which white men might introduce. It is, however, necessary to ensure that the African will

remain an African, and not, as a result of contact with the civilisation of Europe, be turned into a black imitation of the European. "No more vital mistake can be made than to suppose that the West alone has something to give and that the African has nothing to do but to receive. The African is not clay to be cast into Western moulds, but a living type which must develop in accordance with its own law and express its own native genius." [1]

It may be pointed out in passing that the British policy in this respect differs fundamentally from that adopted by France. "France has always considered her Colonies as an integral part of the indivisible Fatherland. She does not distinguish between the various races which live under her flag. In several of her old possessions she has even given to the native population the prerogative of French nationality, notably in the case of the Antilles, and I need not tell you that in the eyes of the Government of the Republic there are not two categories or classes of citizens. We have too great a consciousness of human dignity to set up such an artificial and unjust distinction." [2]

The principle which the British Empire stands for in contrast to this is that the differences between races and nations must continue and even be further developed. The more differences and variations there are in the human type the better, so long as these can be harmonised and prevented from leading to international and inter-racial strife.

[1] J. H. Oldham, M.A., *Christianity and the Race Problem*, p. 74.
[2] Statement of M. Poincaré reported in *The Times*, March 10, 1923.

Though the preservation of tribal organisations and native institutions becomes very difficult as the country develops, this is the fixed policy of the British Administration. "The native chiefs are constituted as an integral part in the machinery of government. There are not two sets of rulers, British and native, ruling separately or in co-operation, but one in which the natives have well-defined duties and an acknowledged status." [1]

The chiefs are left free to exercise control over their people in those things which are to them the most important attributes of power. The British political officer, however, has the right to interfere in case of oppression and injustice. Many of the chiefs, particularly in West Africa, have shown considerable administrative ability, and no greater mistake could be made than to disregard this fact. "The district allotted to me," said one chief, "was a torn robe. I must get needle and thread and piece it together before I can rest." [2]

Unlike the people of Malaya the Africans will work hard and steadily, more particularly when they are working for themselves. Everything possible is done to prevent overlapping between the spheres of the native rulers and the British political officers; for example, in Nigeria, in the case of taxation, competent men are selected and appointed as salaried district headmen, residing in the districts assigned to them, and directly responsible to the native ruler. So long

[1] Sir Frederick Lugard, *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, p. 203.

[2] *Colonial Report.*

as there are no abuses the work of collection is left largely in the natives' hands. Everything possible is done to preserve the dignity and honour of the chief, but at the same time it is insisted that he enjoys these things only provided he does his duty.

In the interests of all, certain powers are reserved to the British Government :

(1) Native chiefs are not permitted to raise armed forces, or to grant permission to their subjects to carry arms (N. Nigeria). In view of African history and the widespread oppression of the weak by the strong, this is a wise and just measure.

(2) The right to levy taxation of any kind is limited to the Suzerain, though the native governments, as has been stated, are responsible for its collection (N. Nigeria). Undoubtedly this is necessary, in view of the exorbitant demands that the chiefs made upon their people before the British arrived.

(3) The right to legislate is reserved, though native rulers and native courts are empowered to enforce native law and custom provided it is not repugnant to humanity or to any ordinance.

(4) The power to appropriate land for public purposes or for commercial purposes is vested in the Governor in part of Nigeria, compensation being given ; in other parts land must be leased from chiefs. This rule is a sufficient answer to those people who assert that British rule in Africa has been built on exploitation.

(5) All servants of the native governments must

be natives, and all aliens come under the administration of the British officials.

(6) The Government reserves the right to confirm or disallow the election of a new chief. Since much of the success of the whole system depends upon the administrative and moral qualities of the chief, this limitation is particularly necessary.

Subject to these restrictions, the chiefs with their district and village headmen, conduct the native government. As far as the British Administrator is concerned it is now generally recognised that some knowledge of Anthropology is advisable, and undoubtedly much harm has been done in the past because white men knew nothing of the customs and traditions of the people whose welfare was confided to their hands.[1] All white men in Africa have a great responsibility, for the native looks up to them, and if he finds that they venerate the ancient institutions of the country he will continue to respect them himself. As certain episodes in West African history

[1] Capt. R. S. Rattray, M.B.E., *The Times*, January 20, 1925. "The Africans possess certain fine national traits and characteristics; progress based on an entire negation and suppression of these, and on their extinction in every sphere of action and of thought, is bound, in my humble opinion, to produce that unsatisfactory hybrid-type of individual who seems to live between two worlds—his own old world, from which he is now more cut off than even a foreigner, who is sympathetic, and the new Western world of thought and action, into which he never quite seems to fit. A retention of what was best in his old world and belonged to and had been evolved by his own peculiar genius in no way need postulate mental stagnation or be a hindrance in the new life which he is striving to enter."

show, particularly the case of the Golden Stool of Ashanti, the rising generation is rather inclined to despise the customs of its fathers, and at all costs this must be prevented. The writer of the report from Ashanti points out that very often the dull monotonous drum-beat which drives the European to distraction is telling the old people of the bygone days and the past glories of their race. The white man who listens with reverence, even though he suffers inward agonies in the effort, is undoubtedly wise.[1]

While, however, respect is paid to established institutions, and while declining ones are as far as possible revived, the white officer must always be ready with advice and counsel, prepared if necessary to use force, for these native institutions contain many barbaric customs, including human sacrifice.[2] Thus, by preserving a wise policy of veneration on the one hand, and firm advice on the other, a new spirit will be breathed into these ancient institutions while the African race is helped along the path of civilisation and progress.

In the West Indies the British Empire is confronted with another phase of the problem of Trusteeship. The available figures appear to show that the population is roughly between 80 per cent. and 85 per cent. negroid—that is, coloured and black, about 3 per cent. white, and the remainder East Indian and other.[3]

[1] *Colonial Report* 1921, No. 1142, *Ashanti*, pp. 17–29. Captain Rattray in *Ashanti* shows the importance of anthropological work among native tribes.

[2] *Colonial Report*, No. 1114, *Nigeria*, 1921, pp. 7 and 8; also other reports.

[3] Hume Wrong, *Government of the West Indies*, p. 10.

The Government of the West Indies, therefore, must be the sort which is most calculated to meet the needs of a population largely descended from slave ancestors. It is not possible to develop existing native institutions, because there are none. The black pall of slavery effectively destroyed any recollection of African institutions, and the only form of government which these people know is European.

Considering that in one island there may be representatives of many African tribes and nations, it is, on the whole, perhaps as well that this is the case.

While it is not proposed here to deal with the long and romantic history of the West Indies, it should be remembered that before 1833—the year of emancipation—many of these islands possessed established representative governments which in some instances dated back to the seventeenth century. With the emancipation of slaves the position was entirely changed, for the old representative governments that had been possible when only a few white planters and traders were concerned were totally unsuited to the new situation. With the slaves turned into citizens and potential voters, it was obvious that some new form of government was necessary. The result is that West Indian history in the nineteenth century superficially appears to be the story of political stagnation and even retrogression. Examination will show, however, that this view is only superficial, for in the nineteenth century the West Indies were confronted with an entirely new problem—the political education of the African masses. This education has

now gone so far that some parties are demanding responsible government, but, with the ghastly example of Hayti as a warning, the British are wise in viewing this demand with misgivings. In addition to this general reason for denying responsible government to the West Indians, there are others equally cogent which appear to make it, for the moment at least, impossible.

The West Indians are only a unity in the sense that they are a geographical expression. Between, for example, the Barbadoes, whose constitution dates back to the seventeenth century, and whose inhabitants are proud of their long history and are practically self-governed, and Dominica, 70 per cent. of whose population is quite illiterate, there are profound divergencies. Further, owing to the fact that the islands are in almost every case very small, responsible government could only be introduced with difficulty into separate islands. As it is, in Jamaica, where the elective principle has been reintroduced, only a microscopic fraction of the population exercises the franchise, and Mr. Wood discovered on his Mission in 1922 that, in the main, the substantial elements of the population do not want responsible government. Further, the educational position, even if these other difficulties did not exist, would make such a thing impracticable. As has been said, 70 per cent. of the population of Dominica is illiterate ; and in Trinidad, where the educational standard is the highest of all the islands, only 56 per cent. of the children of school age are attending school.

The question of West Indian Federation has also

been widely advocated by different island politicians. While on paper such a proposal undoubtedly has many advantages to commend it, it would seem, for a variety of reasons, to be equally impossible. All these island communities have very strongly marked identities of their own, and it is improbable that any of them would be willing to accept the limitations and sacrifices which Federation would entail. Some of them are French in origin, some Spanish, some English, all of them are inordinately proud of their peculiarities which are largely the result of their history, and it is impossible to imagine a Federal system which would commend itself to all. The wide dispersion of these Colonies over the Caribbean Sea is, in itself, an almost insuperable difficulty. Jamaica is separated from the nearest British islands in the Lesser Antilles by nearly 1000 miles. There is no direct steamship communication whatever between Jamaica and Honduras on the one hand and British Guiana on the other. The officer commanding troops in the West Indies found that, when resident in Jamaica, it had taken on one occasion over five and a half months to receive a reply from a letter sent by him to his subordinate in Trinidad. Postal authorities in Jamaica are frequently obliged to send their mails to British Guiana, Trinidad or Barbadoes, via New York, Halifax or England.[1]

Most of the advantages which are supposed to be associated with Federation could be effected without such a violent change. It is not impossible to think that, provided the various Colonial governments are willing, some sort of general unity could be established

[1] The Hon. E. F. L. Wood, *Report on West Indies*, Cmd. 1679.

in the educational, medical, and other services, so as to ensure the elimination of overlapping. The claim that the West Indies would by Federation be enabled to speak with one voice in the Councils of the Empire is sound, but surely this could be achieved by an informal understanding between the Colonies, and the appointment by them of some official or officials to represent them abroad. Further, it is clear, as Mr. Wood states in his Report, that the time has now come when the elective principle could with advantage be introduced on a larger scale into a number of the Colonies, and in fact this has already been done in some instances since his visit, *e.g.* Trinidad.

For many years past there has been a party in the West Indies, particularly in Jamaica, which is anxious to bring about some closer understanding with Canada, both economic and political. While it seems evident from recent debates in the Canadian Parliament [1] that Canada is beginning to awaken to the advantages of West Indian trade, and that Free Trade between Canada and the West Indies will probably be established at no distant date, the problem of political union has many great difficulties in the way of its realisation. Obviously, the bulk of the West Indian people are not yet ready for the complete citizenship of the Dominion, and the only possible way therefore in which this union could be carried through would be by the transfer of the West Indian section of the Colonial Office from Downing Street to Ottawa. There is abundant reason for believing that this would arouse in the West Indies furious opposition. It seems

[1] See *Canadian Hansard*, June 12, 1924.

therefore, for the present at least, that some variation of the Crown Colony form of government must continue, and in the meantime the Colonies would be wise in devoting their energies to the further education of the masses.

It has often been urged by critics of the British Empire that the tropical possessions of the Crown are only held because they are a valuable field for capitalist exploitation. These people suggest that there is something wrong in trade itself and in economic development. It must be acknowledged at once that the Empire has grown up largely because it pays. The tropical Colonies and Protectorates are held to a considerable extent because in the last resort they are of economic advantage to the Empire; the British Empire, in fact, is a paying business. But while all this is true, the assumption that it is therefore built on iniquity is emphatically false. The fact that the people of the Empire profit by their connection with these tropical countries is no reason for holding that the natives do not benefit also. Trade, when properly conducted, since it ministers to the needs of man, is a blessing on both sides, and there is much evidence to show that, as far as the natives are concerned, it has been a blessing. The fact is that the population of the world is increasing rapidly, and sooner or later all its vacant space must be developed for the use of man. As it was, the natives were doing nothing either for themselves or for the world at large. While civilised nations of the earth needed many tropical products, they could give the natives of the tropics many gifts in return. Looked at then merely from the economic

point of view it was inevitable that the development of the tropics should take place.

There is another school of critics who try to prove that these dependencies are a burden, and that we should therefore drop them. At the same time, they portray the capitalist as a satanically shrewd person. Their contention is however impossible, for if the Crown Colonies do not pay the shrewd capitalist would drop them. Since however, being shrewd, he does not drop them, it seems clear that either they do pay or that he is not the only person concerned. The trade returns authorised by the Board of Trade say conclusively that at the present time the trade with the Crown Colonies is very valuable, both to themselves and to the rest of the Empire, and therefore, since their development will undoubtedly continue in the future, that trade will just as certainly increase.[1]

It is often said by another group of people that the natives should have been left to live their simple, happy lives, and that the British have been guilty of criminal interference in disturbing their peaceful Garden of Eden calm. Against this it may be pointed out that, as late as 1909, when the British Representative appeared in one of the Malay States he found that it was the custom for a Judge to hear two cases at once to save time.[2] When the British first

[1] *Summary of Proceedings of the Imperial Conference*, 1923, Cmd. 1987, p. 10 : " Great stress was laid by the representatives of the Dominions and India on the economic importance of these parts of the world, and in particular on the value to the Empire as a whole of the great tropical territories in East and West Africa and in Eastern Asia."

[2] H. E. Egerton, *British Colonial Policy in the XXth Century*, p. 237.

went to Malaya, debt slavery was recognised by immemorial custom, and a family might be permanent serfs for generations because of the temporary financial embarrassment of a remote ancestor. In East Africa, before that area came under British control, the coronation ceremonies of the kings were accompanied by rites too revolting and savage for recital here. The Arab chiefs along the coast demanded from their unfortunate people two children out of every three for the traffic in slaves [1]; even now there is a certain group of tribes just beyond the pale of British influence where cannibalism is still practised. They have no cemeteries in that country, and the corpses of dead relatives are passed on to neighbouring villages on the understanding that the generous giver will receive a like courtesy in future.

In West Africa, when Sir Frederick Lugard went there, he discovered that whole tracts, once described as the most populous in all Africa, were quite depopulated by the Mohammedan slaver. The country has been well described as "a human hunting-ground," where the hunters did not trouble even to protect the game. The quotations from Sir Frederick Lugard's great book will show the sort of people these African rulers were.[2] The miserable people lived in constant

[1] H. E. Egerton, *British Colonial Policy in the XXth Century*, p. 200.

[2] The dungeon at Kano is thus described: "A small doorway 2 feet 6 inches by 18 inches gives access into it; the interior is divided by a thick mud wall (with a smaller hole in it) into two compartments, each 17 feet by 7 feet and 11 feet high. This wall was pierced with holes at its base, through which the legs of those sentenced to death were thrust up to the thigh, and they were left to be trodden on by the mass of other persons till they died of thirst

danger of slavery, robbery, and sudden death, and their aim in life was to inflict these if possible upon their neighbours. They were the victims of all sorts of terrible tropical diseases, a large number of which have been shown by modern science to be preventable. Sleeping sickness, elephantiasis, black-water fever, leprosy, and a variety of other maladies were rampant and accepted as inevitable; no attempt was ever made to separate the sick from the whole. Their lives indeed were "nasty, brutish, mean and short," and it is little wonder that, if impressed by the tremendous power of evil, entirely ignorant of the forces of good, they said in despair, "Evil, be thou my good," and turned to devil-worship.

Leaving out of account altogether considerations of trade, the peoples of Europe would have been guilty of undeniable selfishness if, with all their advantages, they had willingly allowed such things to continue.

Whereas half a century ago Malaya was quite undeveloped, to-day it has a first-class railway built

and starvation. The place is entirely air-tight and unventilated, except for one small doorway, or rather, hole in the wall, through which you creep. The total space inside is 2618 cubic feet, and at the time we took Kano 135 human beings were confined here each night, being let out during the day to cook their food etc. in a small adjoining area. Recently, as many as 200 have been interned at one time. As the superficial ground area was only 238 square feet, there was not, of course, even standing room. Victims were crushed to death every night—their corpses were hauled out each morning. The stench, I am told, inside the place when Colonel Morland visited it was intolerable though it was empty, and when I myself went inside three weeks later, the effluvium was unbearable for more than a few seconds. A putrid corpse even then lay near the doorway."—Sir F. D. Lugard, *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, p. 199.

entirely out of revenues, a well-developed system of roads, an irrigation system, and many thriving towns and villages.[1] Fifty years ago it did nothing or next to nothing in the service of man, yet it produced between 40 per cent. and 50 per cent. of the world's supply of tin in 1916, in addition to one-third of the annual yield of rubber.

The States under British control were so popular in fact that neighbouring States, anxious to share in the general prosperity, voluntarily sought admission within the Empire.[2]

In 1912, quite spontaneously, Sultans of Malaya presented the *Malaya*, which they paid for, to the British Navy as a token of their gratitude. During the War, which was the testing time, for enemy propagandists were busy everywhere, the natives remained enthusiastically loyal and actually voted £1,000,000 sterling to the cost of the War.

The critics say this is all very good for the capitalist and the Sultan, but what about the ryot, *i.e.* peasant ? For the first time in his history he knows that his life and property are secure, that his wife and children will not be torn from him, and that slavery is no more. He knows that before the law he stands on equal footing with the Rajah, he has now clear legal titles, he has land experts at his call to help him in his work, schools which provide for the instruction of his children, hospitals which have been built to alleviate his sufferings, and that his religion is respected. For the first

[1] H. E. Egerton, *British Colonial Policy in the XXth Century*, p. 231.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

time in history he can enjoy life in a way which his ancestors could hope for only in another and better world.

In Africa the results of British rule have been, if anything, more striking, seeing that conditions were infinitely worse to begin with. There is the same story of external prosperity—railways, roads, increasing exports. In one year alone over 180,000 tons of cocoa-beans were exported from the Gold Coast, all of which belonged to the natives. Greater than this material prosperity, however, has been the coming of the rule of law.

In 1915 the Council of Nigeria offered to take over £6,000,000 of the War debt as Nigeria's contribution to the War. Though the offer was refused, the fact that it was voluntarily made is a sufficient indication of the gratitude which these people feel for what has been done. Slavery, anarchy, and lawlessness have disappeared, and the change that has taken place is well illustrated by the reply of a native woman who had travelled for twenty-two miles along an unfrequented road. When asked if she was not afraid, she replied, " Not since the white man made the road." [1]

All the Colonial reports devote large sections to the work of the Medical and Health Departments, and in the whole range of modern science there are few finer stories than that which tells of the struggle which nurses and doctors have carried on in these obscure places of the earth. If Great Britain had done nothing else, the introduction of medical science into these

[1] H. E. Egerton, *British Colonial Policy in the XXth Century*, p. 221.

countries, and the war which British medical missionaries and doctors have carried on against disease, would have amply justified her in going there.

The success of the whole system of the government of backward races, not only in Africa but elsewhere, depends largely upon the teacher. As Captain Rattray points out,[1] if the native desires a higher education, we should provide it for him, but in his own surroundings, so that he may not become denationalised. Captain Rattray says: "It is for this reason that the Gold Coast has launched into a truly great experiment—the founding and building of a great school, Achimota. Here the African will learn much more than the three R's, but in doing so—and this is where Achimota will be an experiment of first-class importance—they will be encouraged to study the folk-lore, the traditions, and the past history and institutions of their own race, instead of to despise and wholly to neglect them, and so, perhaps, will not lose what must be a priceless heritage to any people—their own national soul."

While all this is true, it must be remembered that all white men in Asia and Africa have not been worthy of the race they represent; there have been and there probably still are those who go to these lands for purposes of greed—men whose object is gain and whose method is exploitation. Those who attack the Empire are perfectly right when they say "These people must be eliminated"; they are quite wrong, however, when they suggest that these men represent the British Empire and the things for which it stands.

[1] *The Times*, January 20, 1925.

Those who do represent it, the real trustees, the men who are doing this splendid work for civilisation—the political administrator, the doctor, the teacher, and the missionary—have no axes to grind and no fortunes to make ; they seek one thing only, the good of the people entrusted to their care, and for this they are prepared to sacrifice even life itself, if need be. They ask neither for rewards nor thanks from the world, nor do they receive them, but in the work they do among the child-races of the world, they leave monuments behind them more enduring than brass.

# CHAPTER V

## THE EVOLUTION OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN INDIA

In these days it is becoming increasingly common to think of India as one country and of Indians as one people. Though this may be a "consummation devoutly to be wished," the assumption that the desired goal has already been reached will render it almost impossible to understand the present Indian situation. It is much nearer the truth to think of India as a sub-continent containing many countries, for its population is composed of races more diverse in their physical characteristics, their language, and their customs than any to be found within the boundaries of Europe. Eleven distinct languages are spoken, and there are hundreds of dialects.[1] Generations of hostility, largely resulting from differences of creed, have further split up the population into apparently irreconcilable sections. The Moplah rising[2] in 1921 is but one case of many which show

[1] *India in* 1921–22.

[2] *Moplahs.* The Moplahs are Moslems of a fanatical type, living on the Malabar coast, where out of a population of 3,000,000 they number 1,000,000. They claim to be descendants of Arab ancestors. In August 1921 a serious rising took place, many Hindus being massacred, and British troops were necessary to restore order. Undoubtedly the rebellion was partly caused by the teachings of extremist political leaders.

that this hostility is still alive and terribly real. In the first reformed Indian Legislature, under the heading " Religion," the members were thus classified : seventy Hindus, forty-two Mohammedans, thirteen Christians, five Parsees, four Sikhs, two Buddhists.

Again, in Europe it is usually safe to assume that —potentially at least—the population in any given country has reached approximately the same stage in human development. Such an assumption in India would be very wide of the mark. While in many parts of the jungle are still to be found savages who use bows and arrows, and weapons even more primitive, the cities are inhabited by people who live under thoroughly modern civilised conditions. In the same Province, sometimes in the same district, the authorities are called upon to deal on the one hand with the depredations of criminal and backward tribes, and on the other with the dangers that result from reckless motoring. Almost every link in the long chain of evolution connecting these two extremes can be illustrated from the population. It would be misleading, however, to disregard the fact that there have always been forces in India making for unity as well as those which make for division. India is, after all, a great geographical unit shut in from the rest of Asia by the almost impassable barriers of the Himalayas. In the past there have been Empires which, though they did not bring the whole sub-continent under their control, familiarised Indians with the idea of thinking of the whole peninsula as potentially one. Again, in India there is something which may be called, for lack of a better term, an

Indian culture, which extends beyond political boundaries and even over the gulfs which separate creed from creed.

Modern India has become familiar with all the catchwords of Democracy—free speech, individual liberty, the rights of small nations, national self-determination—though it understands them even less than do the people of England. Often the same men who proclaim these doctrines most loudly are themselves rigid observers of immemorial custom and caste privilege. The politically-minded Brahmin of Madras, for example, feels no inconsistency, while mouthing the shibboleths of democracy, in still regarding the depressed classes, who constitute one-fifth of the population, as so vile that not only are they untouchable and unshadowable, but they are also unseeable. Many of them, while condemning all Western civilisation as satanic, and while adjuring their followers to flee from it as from an unclean thing, nevertheless take full advantage of the Press, the telegraph, and the motor-car. Yet it would be unjust to conclude that because of these apparent inconsistencies these people are thoroughly insincere. On the contrary they are probably perfectly honest. It is simply that a veneer of Western civilisation has been thinly spread over a very ancient fabric, which—if it is not " unchanging "—is far less changeful than it appears. These profound differences in physique, race, language, and religion, social and intellectual development have made India the ethnological mêlée we know it to-day. No one who wishes to understand the present political ferment can afford either to forget or to neglect them.

Since our present concern is with the existing political situation there, little need here be said of ancient Indian history. It is well to remember however, in passing, that while our ancestors still painted their skins and lived the life of untamed savages, India could already boast of an ancient civilisation and a profound philosophy. Down to the foundation of the Mogul Empire, roughly the beginning of the sixteenth century, her history is concerned largely with the fortunes and influences of successive hordes of invaders who poured into the peninsula through the north-west passes of the Himalayas from Central Asia, with occasional invasions from the north-east as well,[1] and

[1] "Suppose that all the English were to leave India, who would be the rulers of India? Is it possible that under those circumstances Mohammedans and Hindus could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down. You must remember that although the number of Mohammedans is less than that of the Hindus, and although they contain far fewer people who have received a high English education, yet they must not be thought insignificant or weak. Probably they would be themselves enough to maintain their own position. But suppose they were not. Then our Mussulman brothers, the Pathans, would come out as a swarm of locusts from their mountain valleys—like a swarm of locusts would they come, and make rivers of blood to flow from the frontier on the north to the extreme end of Bengal. This thing, who after the departure of the English would be the conquerors, would rest on the will of God. But until one nation had conquered the other and made it obedient, peace could not reign in the land. This conclusion is based on proofs so absolute that no one can deny it. Be not unjust to the British Government to whom God has given the rule of India. And look honestly and see what is necessary for it to do to maintain its empire—its hold on the country. You can appreciate these matters; but they cannot who have never held a country in their hands nor won a victory. Oh, my brother Mussulmans! I again remind you that you have ruled nations, and have for centuries held different countries in your grasp. For 700 years in India you

even to-day India still remembers the frightful results of these invasions. In the eighteenth century the Mogul Empire rapidly disintegrated, and left behind it a swarm of soldiers of fortune and robber chieftains to prey upon the hapless people.

It was at this time, much against its will, as the documents prove, that the English East India Company was drawn into the cauldron of Indian politics. In less than fifty years, by a series of steps that it could not avoid, provided it proposed to remain in the country, this comparatively obscure trading company had become the greatest political power in the peninsula. Already, by 1800, the foundations of one of the most efficient paternal governments of modern times had been laid, and by 1856 India stood politically united within her natural frontiers, the Himalayas and the sea.

By that year many parts of India had already enjoyed a period of peace under the Company's rule

have had Imperial sway. You know what it is to rule. Be not unjust to that nation which is ruling over you. And think also of this, how upright is her rule. Of such benevolence as the English Government shows to the foreign nations under her there is no example in the history of the world."—Speech of Sir Syad Ahmad Khan at a meeting of Mohammedans in Northern India, reported by Sir John Strachey, *India—its Administration and Progress*.

*Indian Pioneer Mail*, January 4, 1924. Quotation from *Hindoo Annual Supplement*. "I do not know whether it is contemplated that the Britisher, disgusted with what he finds to be the attitude of the people, would clear out of the country bag and baggage. Granting all this should happen, where shall we find ourselves? We shall be the prey to every marauder from the north and east. We shall have internal dissensions of every degree and magnitude, and we shall have to sit dhurna at the doors of the new power, whose love of fair-play and whose ideas of government would surely not be more humane than those of the government of the day. I emphatically assert that this kind of policy is pessimism run mad."—Mr. T. V. Seshagiri Ayar.

such as they had seldom known. Now for the first time in his history, no matter who his opponent might be, the ryot (*i.e.* peasant) could expect even-handed justice in the courts of law. Indeed, Indian States were so impressed with the superior order and just rule which the British Raj provided that they remonstrated with the British Government for not admitting them within its protectorate, and claimed that this was their right. "They said that some power in India had always existed to which States submitted, and in return obtained its protection against the invasions of upstart chieftains and the armies of lawless banditti; that the British Government now occupied the place of that protecting power, and was the natural guardian of weak States which were continually exposed to the cruelties and oppression of robbers and plunderers, owing to the refusal of the British Government to protect them." [1]

The prophecy of Warren Hastings had been amply borne out: "I will venture to foretell from the knowledge which I have of the general habits and manners of your servants that you will hear of as few instances of licentiousness among them as among the members of any community of the British Empire." [2] Even to-day, when judgments are liable to be clouded and opinions biased, few among the critics of the British in India will question the zeal and integrity with which the British civil servant has discharged his task.

Britain gave to India the best of her sons. They

[1] Lyall, *British Dominion in India*, Letter from Sir Charles Metcalfe, Resident for Rajputana, June 1816, p. 251.

[2] Ramsay Muir, *Making of British India*, Letter from Warren Hastings to Court of Directors, November 11, 1773, p. 111.

made their mistakes, they had their limitations, but they gave their lives to the service of the land of their adoption; and the work which they did, and still do, will remain a fitting monument to their unstinted devotion.

Many of the best of British officials in the first quarter of the nineteenth century (Metcalfe, Elphinstone, and others) looked forward to the time when India would be able to govern herself. Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras, was another who suffered greatly for India, and whom Indians should never forget. Two quotations from him will best illustrate the sort of man he was and the sort of things for which he and his contemporaries stood :

" It is surely a point of the utmost importance to our national character and to the future good government of India that our young servants should be early impressed with favourable sentiments of the Indian people. If we are sincere in our wish to protect and render them justice, we ought to believe that they deserve it."

Again, in a Minute of 1824, he wrote : " It ought undoubtedly to be our aim to raise the minds of the natives, and to take care that whenever our connection with India might cease, it did not appear that the only fruit of our dominion there had been to leave the people more abject and less able to govern themselves than when we found them. . . . Various measures might be suggested, which might all probably be more or less useful, but no one appears to me so well calculated to ensure success as that of endeavouring to give them a higher opinion of themselves, by placing more

confidence in them, by employing them in important positions, and perhaps by rendering them eligible to almost every office under Government. . . . We should look upon India not as a temporary possession, but as one which is to be maintained permanently until the natives shall in some future age have abandoned most of their superstitions and prejudices, and become sufficiently enlightened to frame a regular Government for themselves, and to conduct and preserve it. Whenever such a time shall arrive, it will probably be best for both countries that the British control over India should be gradually withdrawn. That the desirable change contemplated may in some after-age be effected in India, there is no cause to despair. . . . We shall see no reason to doubt that if we pursue steadily the proper measures, we shall in time so far improve the character of our Indian subjects as to enable them to govern and protect themselves." [1]

An examination of Indian constitutional history under British rule would seem to show that Munro here enunciated a principle which has been implicit in our rule in India ever since the time of Warren Hastings.

North's Regulating Act, 1773, in addition to putting an end to many abuses, set up a Governor-General and Council of Bengal, possessing certain powers over the other Presidencies, and a Supreme Court of Justice was also established at Calcutta to ensure justice. This was the first really effective assertion by Parliament of its interest in Indian affairs, as Townshend's Act of 1767 was concerned merely with the moneys to be paid by the Company into the Exchequer. Eleven

[1] Ramsay Muir, *The Making of British India*, pp. 283, 284.

years later another step in the same direction was taken by the creation of a new department of State, the Board of Control. The Act of 1823 abolished the Company's trading monopoly, and ten years later the movement towards centralisation and the elimination of the Company's power was carried several steps further. It was forbidden to engage in trade of any kind, and at the same time a fourth or legal member was added to the Council of the Governor-General, now styled the Governor-General of India. The duties of this new legal member were stated to be the codifying of the Indian law, due regard being paid to the "right feeling and secular usages of the people." Article 87 of this Act is worthy of particular notice here. "No native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty, resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said Company." [1] Twenty years later by the addition of certain nominated members, representing the Judiciary and the other Provinces, to his Executive Council, Lord Dalhousie created the first Legislative Council in India, which was also the first germ of representative government. At the same time a Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal was appointed, and the Governor-General was then enabled to confine his attention to the wider problems of the government of India.

The changes brought about by the Acts of 1858 and which followed on the Mutiny may be taken liament stepped into the place of the

uir, *The Making of British India*, p. 304.

East India Company, while the Court of Directors, the Court of Proprietors and the Board of Control yielded place to the lineal descendant of the latter body, the newly created India Office. This new department of State was presided over by the Secretary of State for India assisted by the Council of India, a body composed partly of men who had been resident in the country for a period of years. The supreme official in India was the Governor-General, assisted by his Executive Council. This latter body was reconstituted in 1858 by Lord Canning so as to contain, in addition to the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief, five members, each of whom presided over a separate department of State. The Legislative Council was increased in numbers from six to twelve, and the judges were replaced by unofficial members [1] representing the Indian and European interests. Legislative Councils were also set up in the Provinces containing similar representative elements, and thus another step in the direction of the establishment of representative institutions had been taken.

In the meantime, in 1858, Queen Victoria had her great Proclamation to the people of Proclamation which the latter have since regarded as their Magna Charta : " It is our further will that so far as may be, our subjects of whatever race or creed freely and impartially admitted to the duties of which they may be qualified education, ability and integrity

[1] *Unofficial member.* One who, ment, is free to vote as he pleases

[2] Ramsay Muir, *The Making*

# Evolution of Self-Government in India

After 1861 two opposed parties grew up in India: on the one hand, the politically minded Indians, basing their opinion on Article 87 of the Act of 1833, on the proclamation of the Queen, and on the progress so far made, have tended to regard the Councils as embryo Parliaments, and to strive for further instalments of representative institutions. On the other hand, the view of some more conservative people has been to consider the Councils as mere pocket Legislatures which have been unwisely set up by an over-generous British Government.

So far as the constitution is concerned, Indian history since that date has centred mainly round three questions:

1. The increase of the unofficial element on the Councils, both Imperial and Provincial.
2. The introduction of the elective principle.
3. The assumption of responsibility for the government of their country by Indians themselves.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, [illegible] to the present time, India has been flooded [illegible] ever-increasing stream of Western ideas, both good and bad. In an incredibly short space the country has passed through revolutions, political, [illegible]ial and in[illegible]ial, as profound as any that we have [illegible] history, and the wonder is that the [illegible]ave not been more chaotic than they are. [illegible] interested in public affairs has 1861 [illegible] Many of these have been gradu- together. Par[illegible]s, and familiar with British [illegible] political principles. It

[1] Ramsay M[illegible]

should be no matter for surprise if sometimes the minds of these men have been captured by the false analogy between their own position and that of Pym and Hampden, and undoubtedly the political crank who seems to flourish in these islands has done much by impressing this analogy upon Indians to make the task of the Indian Government more difficult. To the sober-minded Englishman many of their speeches seem unduly exaggerated and flamboyant, but it is doubtful if they are much worse in this respect than those of Louis Papineau and William Lyon Mackenzie, the leaders of Canadian democracy a century ago.

In 1886 a delegate meeting of Indians, mainly educated in Europe, met at Bombay to form the All India National Congress. The object of this organisation was to protect and further Indian interests everywhere, and more particularly to act as the mouthpiece of Indian political aspirations. Since that time it has continued to meet annually; but until about ten years ago its procedure tended to be stereotyped, the same resolutions being passed from year to year, and the same set speeches delivered. Even before the War there were indications of division, and during the War a final split took place in this body between the irreconcilable enemies of government and the Liberals or Moderates, who were prepared to give the new Councils a fair trial.

Whereas in 1861 men said "We had better hear what a few Indians of our choosing have to say about our laws," they said in 1889 "Our laws have positively benefited by the Indian advice and criticism. Let us have more of it, and if possible let the people

choose the men they send to advise us." [1] Consequently in 1892 an attempt was made in Lord Cross's Act to find a working compromise between these two opposed views of the Councils. In the Imperial Legislative Council the number of additional members was raised to not fewer than ten and not more than sixteen, of whom not more than six were to hold official positions. Five were appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the non-official members of the four Provincial Councils and the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce. The Provincial Legislative Councils were at the same time increased by additional members appointed on the nomination of a few large cities, groups of municipalities and district boards, by Chambers of Commerce, by universities, and—after the change introduced in 1897 in Bengal—by one member nominated by the large Zemindars (*i.e.* land-owners). Members were permitted to discuss the annual financial statement in both the Imperial and Provincial Councils, and to ask questions, but the right to submit or propose a resolution, or to divide the House on the budget or on any question was denied.

Finally, to quote the Chelmsford-Montagu Report, the term "election" was sedulously eschewed; but inasmuch as the nomination by recommending bodies came to be accepted as a matter of course, the fact of election to an appreciable proportion of the new official seats was firmly established. This measure, like so many of its predecessors, was intended by its authors to be final, and to mark the furthest limit to

[1] *Report of East India Constitutional Reform*, 1918, Cmd. 9109, p. 55.

which representative institutions could be extended in India. Things being as they were, however, with the ideals of the West constantly increasing their influence upon the people, it was impossible that this state of unstable equilibrium could be permanently maintained.

Since 1892 the spirit of change has been more active in India than ever. The meteoric rise of Japan to a first place among the nations, and still more her dramatic victory over Russia, acted as a stimulus to the political consciousness of the whole of the East, especially to that of India. If, Indians argued, Japan can do these things, surely our country which is much greater and more prosperous can do likewise. Consequently, in 1906, the All India National Congress passed a resolution demanding that the system of government which existed in the self-governing British Dominions should be extended to India. About this time the leaders of Mohammedan opinion formed the All Mussulman League, which was designed to be the mouthpiece of Mohammedan aspirations, political, social, and religious.

In answer to this growing demand for Councils that should be more representative, the so-called " Morley-Minto Reforms " were introduced in 1909. Instead of nomination by Government, a modified form of election was introduced for a large number of seats on the Provincial and Imperial Councils, the Mohammedans being given—thanks to their new League—a special communal electorate [1] and representation. On the

[1] *Communal electorate and representation.* The communal roll is one in which the right to vote is determined by membership of some particular group—social, racial, or religious.

Provincial Councils the official majority [1] was abandoned, though still retained in the Imperial Council. Members were given greatly increased rights of discussion and interpellation, and the size of all the Councils was trebled. In the face of a good deal of hostile criticism Lord Morley appointed Indians both to the Council of India, which advises the Secretary of State in London, and to the Viceroy's Executive Council. At the time, these Reforms were considered very generous, and it was hoped that all the substantial elements in the country would rally round the Government to make the Councils work. Lord Morley and many others, in 1909, like their predecessors in 1892, believed that no further extension of representative institutions could be expected, and that India could never look forward to complete responsible government. In fact, it seems that the air of finality which surrounded these new Councils went far to achieve their own undoing.

It was soon clear that there were many defects in the new system. Although the elective principle had been introduced, it was so limited in its application and so hedged about with restrictions as to make it a mere shadow of its real self. The Indians had been given just enough of Parliamentary Government to whet their appetite for more. Further, the right of interpellation and criticism had been extended to members, but the concession had not been accompanied by any corresponding burden of responsibility.

[1] *Official majority*. The term is applied to a Council in which the majority are paid officials under Government, and are therefore bound to support it when required.

Since the opponents of Government in the Councils knew that they would never be called upon themselves to form a Government, a permanent Opposition was created which felt perfectly free to indulge in the most violent and unreasoning speeches imaginable. In the words of the Chelmsford-Montagu Report: "The Morley-Minto Reforms initiated and adopted Parliamentary usages up to the point where they cause the maximum of friction, but short of that at which, by giving a real sanction, they begin to do good." [1]

In the Councils themselves, in the All India National Congress, in the All Mussulman League, and throughout the country, vigorous political propaganda against the new system was carried on. The Indian leaders regarded it as a very meagre and ungenerous partial recognition of their rights. The Conservative element believed that things had gone too far, and that the new Councils marked an unjustifiable concession made by a feeble Government to political agitators. It is difficult to see how, once the initial step of setting up a Legislative Council in 1853 had been taken, the later progress could have been prevented. As in England in 1832, when the first Reform Bill became law, it was inevitable that further instalments of political enfranchisement should follow, so in India, once the Legislative Council had been established in 1853, and the Representative Councils in 1862, further developments of the system of representation were inevitable.

Contrary to expectation the political ferment in India after 1909 increased. The assassin, who had

[1] *East India (Constitutional Reforms) Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* [Cd. 9109], p. 69.

already made his appearance in Bengal before that date, now raised his hand against the Viceroy himself. Everywhere throughout the country, before 1914, were signs of seething discontent ; though, one might justly remark in passing, the very fact that such sedition and discontent existed is, in a sense, proof of the honesty with which the British have attempted to grapple with the political education of the Indian peoples.

This, then, was the position at the outbreak of the War, and the catchwords of the Allies still further aggravated the trouble. For a time, indeed, there was a lull, but it was only a lull. Indians were told they were fighting for the rights of oppressed nations, that every nation had the right to self-determination, and so on. The wish that India should herself be a nation was father to the belief that she was already one, and it was the most natural thing in the world for Indian politicians to apply these catchwords to the existing situation in their own country. If, they argued, India is fit to fight for these high ideals and to pour out her blood and treasure in their defence, then surely she has the right to enjoy their blessings. We must remember that India played her part in the struggle, made great sacrifices for the common cause, and contributed her considerable share to the attainment of victory.

As the War went on Indians naturally began to think that because of their country's great effort she had a right to a better status in the British Commonwealth of Nations than she then enjoyed. In 1915 a non-official member of the Indian Legislative Council moved a resolution that representations should be made to His Majesty's Government requesting that

India in future should be officially represented in the Imperial Conferences. As a result, Indian representatives were admitted to the important Conference of 1917 and 1918; Indian representatives went with the British Empire delegation to Paris in 1919; India's signature appears on the Peace Treaty, and India is a member of the League of Nations.

Long before the signing of peace, however, a change, perhaps even more fundamental than representation in the Imperial Conference, had been adumbrated. On August 20, 1917, Mr. Montagu—then Secretary of State for India—made the momentous announcement in Parliament of the new policy which was to be adopted: "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." [1] Thus the attempt at blending the principle of autocracy derived from Mogul emperors and Hindu kings with the principle of constitutionalism derived from the British Crown and Parliament was abandoned, and India by successive instalments was to be given the same government which Britain had worked out for herself through many centuries. This may turn out to have been the greatest blunder we have ever made; for who can say that the sort of government which is suited to the people of British stock,

[1] *East India (Constitutional Reforms) Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* [Cd. 9109], p. 5.

the sort of government which is the political expression of their national character and the result of their history—the result, one might almost say, of the accidents of their history—will be suited to the needs of the myriads of Indians with all their traditions, customs, and beliefs behind them? But whether it fails or whether it succeeds, one thing is clear—that Britain is trying according to her lights to deal justly with India. Well may Indians repeat the words spoken long ago by the old Anglo-Saxon king when he first heard Augustine preaching the Gospel of Christ: "Fair are the words which you speak and the promises which you make, for you desire to share with us that which you hold to be best and truest."

Immediately after making this great announcement Mr. Montagu set out for India, and there, during the next ten months with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, he made a thorough survey of the field. On July 8 of the following year, 1918, appeared the famous report which bears their names, and on December 23, 1919, the Government of India Act received the royal signature. During 1920 officials were fully engaged in India preparing the electorate and carrying through the elections. This was by no means a simple task, as so large a proportion of the population was quite illiterate, and various devices had to be used to make the peasants understand what they were doing. "In the case of Bombay, for example, it was decided to adopt the coloured box or symbol system. There was a separate box at each polling station, to which was allotted the colour, or symbol given to a particular candidate. Where the number of candidates was five

or fewer, the boxes were coloured white, black, yellow, red, and green. When the number of candidates was greater than five to each was assigned a symbol, such as a horse, cart or sword, or some other universally recognisable article, for it was found that country voters could not be trusted to recognise with certainty more than the five colours mentioned." [1]

In the beginning of 1921 the Duke of Connaught, as he said himself, paid his last visit to the India he loved, to open the new Councils at Delhi, and to ask all sections of the community to " bury along with the dead past the mistakes and misunderstandings of the past, to forgive where you have to forgive, and to join hands and work together to realise the hopes that arise from to-day." [2]

Thus, perhaps more rapidly than he expected, in less than a century after Munro's time his countrymen had carried India many stages along the path which he had hoped she would follow. It now remains very briefly to summarise the changes introduced by the Act of 1919.

The new system of government as it applies to the Provinces has been called Dyarchy, because it is a blending of the two rules, autocratic and democratic. Unlike the Morley-Minto scheme, however, it is not a permanent blending, since the aim is ultimately to substitute the democratic for the autocratic principle entirely. The most interesting innovations have been made in the sphere of Provincial Government. Each of the Governor's Provinces now has a Legislative Council containing at least 70 per cent. elected members, and not more than 20 per cent. official; or, to

[1] *India in* 1920, p. 66. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

put it in another way, the total of nominated members, official and non-official, must not exceed 30 per cent. The Councils vary greatly in size, according to the population and size of the Provinces, from Assam, with 53 members, to 125 in Bengal.

The system attempts to divide power and responsibility in such a way that where Indians have power they shall also have responsibility. The Act distinguishes two classes of Provincial subjects which, while interdependent, are known respectively as "transferred" and "reserved." The "transferred" subjects are administered by the Governor, acting on the advice of Ministers, and up to this extent responsible government has already been introduced. In order to ensure that the Government will not be brought to a standstill the Act provides that under very special circumstances the Governor may require action to be taken contrary to the advice of his Ministers. But this power is to be used only on rare occasions, in cases of utmost necessity. "Transferred" powers include Local Government, Education, Public Health and Sanitation, Medical Services, Industrial Development, Public Works, Fisheries, Forestry (in some cases), and Agricultural Co-operation. The Ministers who have charge of all these important functions of government must be themselves chosen from among the elected members of the Council, and it can no longer be said therefore that only a shadow of the principle of election and Cabinet responsibility has been introduced.

"Reserved" subjects remain in the hands of the Governor-in-Council; for these the Governor is responsible to the Viceroy, and through him to the

Secretary of State for India and to Parliament. These subjects include Administration of Justice (subject to certain limitations), Police, Prisons, Sources of Provincial Revenue, Revenue Administration and Famine Relief. While this division is made, however, it still remains true that the two branches are interdependent. Where, in the administration of any "transferred" power, the services of the Police Force or the Military are required, recourse must be had to the reserved side of Government.

At the end of ten years from the passing of the Act, a Statutory Commission will proceed to India to examine the work done during the intervening period and to make recommendations. If it is discovered that in any or in all of the Provinces satisfactory progress has been made and that Ministers have shown themselves thoroughly competent to deal with the subjects already "transferred," the number of these subjects will be increased. This increase in the sphere of responsible government will be continued until no "reserved" powers remain, and in the sphere of Provincial Government India will have attained to full responsibility.

In addition to the changes in the present Councils, the Act of 1919 set up a bicameral legislature for the whole of India. The Upper House or Council of State consists of not fewer than sixty members, nominated and elected, of whom not more than twenty may be official and thirty-three elected. The Lower House, or Legislative Assembly, has a minimum membership of 140 to be elected and 40 nominated, 26 of whom are officials. Thus it is clear that everything possible is

being done in a transitory phase like the present to ensure the preponderating influence of the elected and non-official members. The Viceroy in his own sphere, like the Governor of the Province in his, provided a serious emergency arises, may certify that a measure thrown out by either or both Houses of the Legislature is necessary for the carrying on of the government. This, however, should be done only after every method of conciliation and persuasion has failed, and every measure so certified must, within a specified period of time, come before Parliament for discussion.

The Royal Commission provided for in the Statute, in addition to examining the work done by the Provinces, will report on the progress made in the central Legislature. Here again, provided satisfactory progress has been made, the powers of the Legislature will be increased, while that of the Secretary of State in Parliament over Indian affairs will be reduced. This will continue until India receives complete responsible government and will occupy precisely the same position in the British Commonwealth as the great self-governing Dominions.

Thus it is clear that this new system entails not only a breach with the past and a departure from ancient traditions, but also an education in new ways of thought and the establishment of new institutions.

## CHAPTER VI

### INDIA AND THE NEW COUNCILS

SINCE the War, India, like the rest of the world, has been subject to great fluctuations in prosperity. In her case these have appeared more violent owing to the fact that so large a proportion of the population is, at the best of times, living on the line of mere subsistence. Although there are many wealthy people in India, the country is very poor, and a bad monsoon may mean famine to many. In 1918 the monsoon was a failure and again in 1921. Of course the Government was blamed, and ignorant peasants were led to believe that the English had actually caused the monsoon to fail in order to increase their income from the artificial water-supply. Added to these causes of unrest Bolshevist agents had been touring various parts of the country stirring up disaffection. Although Government was perfectly aware of the activities of these people, as was shown in the British note to Russia of May 1923, it was difficult to combat them. One glaring instance will perhaps serve to illustrate their activities. In *The Times*, June 11, 1923, appeared the following report from India: "Seven Indians were convicted by the Sessions Judge of Peshawar on May 18 of being active members of a

conspiracy to overthrow the established Government of India. The accused themselves admitted that during a prolonged course at Moscow University, following on a more elementary training in 1920–21 at the Tashkent Propaganda School, they had been fully instructed in the subjects and method necessary for revolutionary work in India." Since this date there has been another Bolshevist conspiracy trial and a number of men convicted at Allahabad.

These things in themselves would have been quite sufficient to make the success of the new Councils difficult, but they are nothing as compared with the internal factors of unrest in India. Three groups of causes making for disorder may be enumerated, though each of them has ramifications far too numerous and intricate to be mentioned here. There are, in the first place, the reverberations resulting from the Rowlatt Bills. Secondly, closely associated with these has been the agitation over the so-called " Punjab Massacre," and, thirdly, that group of causes of disturbance which may be collectively termed the Khilafat Question.

First, the Rowlatt Bills. In India during the war, as in England, it was found necessary to pass a special law, known in India as the " Defence of India Act," in order to provide Government with special powers for dealing with enemy propaganda. This measure was very unpopular, particularly among the enemies of the British Raj (*i.e.* rule), and long before the Armistice, Government had been urged to repeal it. In 1919 it was decided to do so, but since it was well known that there was a great deal of Bolshevist

activity as well as internal sedition going on, it was felt that, for the moment, special powers should be given to Government to enable it to cope with this particularly difficult situation. In order to do this the Rowlatt Measures were brought forward. To the utter astonishment of the Administration a furious storm of misrepresentation swept the country. The bills were proof, the vernacular press asserted, that the Chelmsford-Montagu Report was a mere sham; and now that Britain had beaten Germany, India was to be subjected to a tyranny such as the world had never seen.

Secondly, the "Punjab Massacre." The outcry against the Rowlatt Measures led to rioting in Delhi on March 30. This was suppressed by the military with some casualties. Rioting and murder in Lahore and Ahmedabad ensued on April 11, but these outbursts were speedily overshadowed by still more tragic events at Amritsar. An infuriated mob got out of hand, killed a number of Europeans and destroyed a great deal of valuable property. In the opinion of those in authority the situation was more serious than any since 1857, and there was grave danger of these outbreaks developing into a general rising in the Punjab. Martial law was proclaimed in Amritsar and public meetings prohibited. One which took place in defiance of this order was dispersed by the troops and lives were lost.[1] These facts are only mentioned here in order to bring out the second great cause of unrest in India since the War. The Amritsar martyrs, as the victims at the Jallianwala Bagh were called,

[1] *Report of the All-Indian National Congress Sub-Committee.*

were to do yeoman service for the political agitators on many occasions during the next three turbulent years. Time after time meetings have been driven into a fury by the exaggerated tale of British brutality on that disastrous April 13. Of course, these agitators always left out of the picture the depredations of the Indian mob which preceded the tragedy, and they said nothing either about the valuable property which was wantonly destroyed or of the peaceful Europeans who were murdered.

Thirdly, the Khilafat question. It seems fairly certain now that if the treaty of peace with Turkey had been concluded at the same time as that with Germany, there might never have been a Khilafat question in India. Indian Mohammedans might well have accepted the conditions of the peace as the will of fate and said nothing. The long period of time that elapsed between the two treaties, however, gave them time to reflect and to nourish the belief that, with a sufficient amount of agitation, they might induce Great Britain to use her influence in favour of Turkey. It seems fairly clear also, from the evidence available, that while many Mohammedans were undoubtedly sincere, to a large number of the leaders of the movement the wrongs of Turkey and the supposed threat to the faith were mere excuses.

These men knew perfectly well that the best way to play upon Muslim feeling was to tell the people that the Commander of the Faithful was being insulted, and that the holy cities of Mecca and Medina were in danger. The Khilafat question was, from their point of view, a convenient big stick with which to beat an

already embarrassed and over-driven Government. This would seem to be borne out by events which have taken place since 1919. Mr. Montagu's departure from the India Office, owing to the attitude he adopted on this question, are sufficient proof that both the Viceroy and the Secretary of State were exerting all their influence in the interests of Islam.

In the autumn of 1922 the Turks themselves deposed the Sultan and divided the spiritual from the temporal power. Later, they declared a republic in Turkey, drove the late Sultan into exile, and thus offered the Commander of the Faithful greater insults than had been dreamed of by any Christian Powers. Yet, although these things have convinced many Mohammedans in India that the "Satanic British Government" is not the chief lion in the path of Muslim harmony, Indian agitators, even after these events, still used the so-called "Khilafat Wrong" to stir up the passions of the people.

While there have been other important causes of unrest in India, such as the Akali (*i.e.* Sikh fanatic) Movement in the Punjab, and the distress from economic causes which was felt particularly keenly in India, these three—the Rowlatt Bills, the "Punjab Massacre," and the "Khilafat Wrong"—have been the most important. It would perhaps be truer to call these not so much causes in themselves as convenient material for anti-Government propaganda which the enemies of Government found ready to their hand. The real causes of unrest lie much deeper than these things, and are the inevitable result of the last 150 years of Indian history. It was clear that, pro-

vided the proper man should appear, it would not be difficult to unite these three causes of disaffection in one, and this man appeared in the person of the enigmatic Mahatma Gandhi, who was destined to dominate the Indian political stage from March 1919 to March 1922.

Mahatma Gandhi was born in 1869, and as a young man spent some time in England, where he took the London Matriculation Examination, and was admitted to the English Bar. Previous to 1914 he spent many years in South Africa, where he championed the rights of his countrymen, and finally succeeded in having a great number of very unfair restrictions removed from them. When he left South Africa in 1914 the South African correspondent of the *Round Table* of September 1914 wrote: "He has returned to India, enjoying the devoted affection of his own race and the sincere esteem of the Europeans in South Africa. If his successors have a tithe of his ability and of his loftiness of character the Indian community in this country will have been singularly fortunate in its leaders." It is a matter of profound regret not only for Mr. Gandhi himself, but for India and the whole Empire, that he was not prepared to content himself with the laurels which he had thus honourably won.

In order to understand Mr. Gandhi's career it is necessary to remember that at heart he is a social reformer rather than a politician. Mr. Gandhi is a devoutly religious man, strongly inclined to asceticism, a stranger to luxury and physical comfort. It is, in fact, this ascetic life of his which explains a good deal of his power over his fellow-countrymen, for every

Indian, no matter what his own life may be, has a deep-seated reverence for those who lead lives of poverty, contemplation and prayer. The following extracts, taken at random from the sketch of his life given by his biographer,[1] will illustrate the attitude of the devout Indians to this remarkable man. " It is only India that knows how to honour greatness in rags . . . but India, though she shift and enlarge her circumference age after age, keeps true to her spiritual centre and retains her spiritual vision undimmed and eager to acclaim her saints . . . rather let our critical judgment confirm the unerring instinct of the people that recognises in Mahatma Gandhi a lineal descendant of those great sons of compassion who became the servants of humanity—Gautama Buddha, Chaitanya, Ramanuja, Ramakrishna."

" By impassioned devotion he has developed a character before which men stand in awe. To the self-discipline of the ascetic he adds the sweetness and simplicity of a saint. The hero's will is in him wedded to the heart of a child. The service of man answers to the love of God. It was of such that it was said : Ye are the salt of the earth."

As a reformer Mr. Gandhi has been described as a Tolstoyan in Indian garb, who represents the reaction of Hinduism from Christianity, of Eastern civilisation from Western civilisation. In this turbulent modern age the leaders of Hindu thought began to realise that the contact of West with East was causing profound unrest among the people, and that unless they were

[1] *Mahatma Gandhi, Life, Writings and Speeches*, with Foreword by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu.

prepared to put their house in order they stood in grave danger of losing a large section of their following. While Hindu custom and tradition recognised all manner of legal inequalities, the British Courts held that, before the Judge, all men stood equal. Again, while Hindu custom had come to recognise degrees of spiritual value in human beings, that the outcaste was little better than the beast, and the " twice-born " Brahmin but little lower than the gods, Christian missionaries taught the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. It is little wonder that, this being the case, Christianity met with greatest success among the oppressed classes, just as in Roman times it first spread most rapidly among the slaves. In his attempt to " kill the snake of untouchability " Mr. Gandhi stands for reformed Hinduism, which has learnt a lesson from Christianity. No one can deny that a good deal of Mr. Gandhi's teachings is perfectly sound. The emphasis he places upon their common interests rather than upon their differences proves that he tried honestly to close up the old breach between Mohammedan and Hindu. He led a campaign against alcoholism and other social evils which, though ill-conducted and mismanaged by his followers, as far as he was concerned sprang from a passionate desire to better his people.

It is, however, Mr. Gandhi the political agitator, not Mr. Gandhi the Hindu reformer, that concerns us here. As in everything else, he approaches political problems from the religious point of view, and in politics, as in religion, represents the reaction of the East from the West.

In a speech delivered by him at a public meeting on January 21, 1921, he said: "What is modern civilisation . . . it is the worship of the brute in us . . . it is the worship of the material . . . and I am here to tell you, the young men of Bengal, and I am here to tell my educated leaders, what my experience of modern civilisation, worked at its best, told me in emphatic terms in the year 1908. God save India from that modern curse." [1]

As a champion of Hinduism in its purest form and of Indian civilisation at its best, Mr. Gandhi will always command the respect and admiration of all right-thinking people. But Gandhi, the apostle of racial antagonism, the self-deceived prophet who obstinately refuses to accept the facts of the modern world, the uncompromising champion of things Eastern, merely because they are Eastern, who refuses to see that the people of the East and West must learn to live together in harmony unless the civilisations of both go down in chaos, deserves nothing but unqualified condemnation.

In February 1919 Mr. Gandhi announced that he would lead a Satyagraha (*i.e.* passive resistance) movement if the Rowlatt Bills were passed, and on March 1 he recommended his countrymen to take the pledge: "Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bill known as the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Bill No. 1 of 1919, and the Criminal Law Emergency Powers Bill No. 2 of 1919 are unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual on which the safety of

[1] Mahatma Gandhi, *Swaraj in One Year*, p. 53.

India as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as the committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit, and we further affirm that in the struggle we will faithfully refrain from violence to life, person and property." [1]

At the same time he advised that the second Sunday after the Vice-Regal assent to these bills should be observed as a day of national humiliation and prayer. And thus he set the train alight which resulted in the explosion at Amritsar six weeks later. After that event, though too late, Mr. Gandhi listened to the counsel of his saner advisers. He recognised, as he said himself, that he had made a "Himalayan blunder" and ordered his followers to co-operate with the Government. His repentance, however, was shortlived, for in the following November at the Khilafat Conference held at Delhi he proposed a non-co-operation remedy for the Khilafat wrong. If the British Government and the Government of India remained deaf to the representations of those Indian Mohammedans who desired the restoration of the Ottoman Empire to its political and religious status, it might be necessary for all Indians, whether Hindu or Mohammedan, to sever their connection with a power so deaf to the claims of things spiritual. Again, in a later speech he said: "Musulmans cannot remain as honourable men and follow their Prophet if they do not vindicate their honour at all costs." [2]

[1] *Mahatma Gandhi, Life, Writings and Speeches*, p. 338.
[2] Mahatma Gandhi, *Swaraj in One Year*, p. 4.

Statements like these repeated on many occasions won him the enthusiastic support of the Mohammedan community, more particularly of the extreme section.

In June 1920 he added another string to his bow. Action taken by Government on the Amritsar affair was not in his opinion sufficiently drastic, and he therefore took up the righting of the "Punjab Wrong" (*see* p. 100, "Punjab Massacre") as well. This secured him the loyal allegiance of the warlike people of that Province. "If I had to choose between the honour of the Punjab and anarchy, the neglect of all education, the shutting out of all legislative activity and the British connection, I would choose the honour of the Punjab and all that it means, even anarchy." [1]

In July 1920 he proceeded to put himself at the head of the Home Rule (Swaraj) movement. He proclaimed that the winning of Swaraj was now his most important objective. True to his custom, however, Mr. Gandhi remained vague as to what he meant by the term Swaraj. Thus a catchword was provided which was calculated to attract all classes. To him and his more devout followers it probably meant self-government of the self, the triumph of the spirit over the body. "Others read into it Dominion Home Rule, to another party it represented complete independence, yet others interpreted it as Muslim supremacy. Above all, to the masses it shortly became synonymous with the commencement of a golden age, when prices should fall, when taxation should

[1] Mahatma Gandhi, *Swaraj in One Year*, p. 7.

cease, when each man should be free from all State fetters, free to do that which he would with his own —and his wealthier neighbour's—property." [1]

Thus all sorts and conditions of people adopted the new gospel, a very small fraction of whom had the slightest intention of abiding by its rules of non-violence and love. During the remaining months of 1920 Mr. Gandhi went from triumph to triumph.

In August Mr. Tilak died, and in the following December Mr. Gandhi became the undisputed leader of the Indian National Congress. From that time on to his arrest he had the entire machinery of the Congress organisation in his hands, and he worked it persistently with a view to the utter confusion and overthrow of the Government. At the meeting in 1920 the Congress amended the first article of its Constitution as adopted at the meeting of 1908. In that year it had been stated that: "The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members. These objects are to be achieved by Constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country." This article, as amended by the Congress

[1] *India in* 1921–22, p. 39.

of 1920, reads: "The object of the Indian National Congress is the attainment of Swaraj by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means." [1]

Before going further with the career of this extraordinary man it might be as well to summarise briefly the main principles of his political creed. In his campaign against British power there were to have been two stages: the preliminary stage, of non-co-operation, was designed to weaken the power of the Government and to instruct the masses in the principles of passive resistance. When these two desirable ends had been attained, the second stage in the campaign, mass civil disobedience was to be entered upon. It was hoped that this would achieve the complete overthrow of the crumbling edifice of the British Raj. The new National Government, which in the meantime would have been built up, would take over the control of the country, and the Golden Age would then begin.

The non-co-operation programme, adopted by the All-India National Congress in 1920, contains seven articles:

1. Surrender of all offices and titles, and resignation of seats in local bodies. "Immediately the conquered country realised instinctively that any gift which might come to it is not for the benefit of the conquered, but for the benefit of the conqueror, that moment it should reject every form of voluntary assistance to him." [2]

[1] *India in* 1920, Appendix V, p. 254.
[2] Mahatma Gandhi, *Swaraj in One Year*, pp. 6–7.

2. Refusal to attend official functions. It was in fulfilment of this article that the calamitous resolution to boycott the Prince of Wales was taken, a resolution which has done more harm to India than many Amritsar massacres.
3. Withdrawal of children and young people from Government schools and colleges, and the substitution of national institutions. "I ask all the medical students, and all the boys of the colleges, and all the boys over sixteen years of the schools, without a moment's hesitation . . . to leave their schools and colleges to finish that one peremptory duty that devolves upon them." [1]
4. The boycott of British Courts and the substitution of National Courts and Boards of Arbitration.
5. Refusal by the labouring and military classes of service abroad. "They want India's manpower and they want India's brains for their Imperialist greed. If we refuse to supply them with men and money we achieve our goal—Swaraj, equality, and manliness." [2]
6. Withdrawal by candidates of their candidature to the Reformed Councils and refusal on the part of the voters to exercise the franchise. "Let us not mistake Reform Councils, Law Courts and even Governorships for real freedom or power; they are but subtler methods of emasculation." [3]

[1] Mahatma Gandhi, *Swaraj in One Year*, p. 67.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 17. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

7. The boycott of foreign goods. This was a feature of the programme which attracted Indian manufacturers at first. "The revival of hand-spinning is the least penance we must do for the sin of our forefathers in having succumbed to the satanic influences of the foreign manufacturer." [1]

Provided Indians were prepared to follow these principles the Satanic British Government would be overthrown and India would establish her freedom. "I promise that before the year is out you will not have regretted the day that you set your heart upon these . . . things, and you will find at the end of the chapter that what I am saying to you to-night has come true and that you have vindicated the honour of India—you have vindicated the honour of Islam, and you have vindicated the honour of the whole nation and established Swaraj." [2]

In June 1921 Mr. Gandhi pronounced the boycott of all foreign cloth and ordered its forcible destruction. This order his non-violent followers obeyed with surprising alacrity, considering their creed. In August, while re-affirming previous resolutions of non-violent non-co-operation, the Congress Committee resolved to boycott the festivities in honour of the Prince of Wales. In November this Committee went on to authorise every Province to begin mass civil disobedience, subject to the two conditions of non-violence and boycott of British cloth. Mr. Gandhi himself was to lead the movement at Bardoli in

[1] Mahatma Gandhi, *Swaraj in One Year*, p. 40.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 65–66.

Gujarat, and he issued a manifesto, calling upon all Government servants who could support themselves, to desert their posts and rally to the Congress flag. This movement, however, was postponed, owing to the brutal activities of his followers in Bombay and other centres which the Prince visited. In Bombay alone 53 people were killed and approximately 400 wounded.

Finally, in February, the movement was to be launched. Again, however, before Mr. Gandhi had officially opened the campaign a mob of peasantry, lashed to fury by the speeches of non-co-operation agitators, brutally murdered twenty-one policemen and rural watchmen at Chauri-Chaura. Mr. Gandhi at once suspended all plans for mass civil disobedience, and ordered his followers to confine their attention to a programme of social reform, in which the salvation of the depressed classes, the spinning-wheel, and the temperance campaign figured largely. This recantation gave the *coup de grâce* to Mr. Gandhi's reputation as a political leader, though veneration for his person still continued.

Long before this it had been clear that even he could not keep his heterogeneous army together. Early in 1921 a cleavage had appeared between himself and his capitalist supporters, over his denunciation of all manufactured goods. Further, the Mohammedans were beginning to show signs of dissatisfaction. The more violent section of that community had been displeased by his successive postponements of the commencement of the mass civil disobedience campaign. The saner section of their community were

beginning to see that the Indian Government and the British Government were doing all in their power to re-establish good relations with Turkey. The letters of the Indian Government, and all the circumstances surrounding Mr. Montagu's resignation, convinced many that more was to be hoped for from Government than from Mr. Gandhi's campaign. Subsequent events in Turkey, the separation of the spiritual from the temporal power, the deposition of the Sultan, and the declaration of a Mohammedan Republic still further strengthened this belief.

Lastly, when January 1, 1922, passed by as all previous days had done, and the Satanic Government was still as strong as ever, the Ryots began to think that it would be better for them after all to till their fields than to trust to the dawn of a Golden Age whose advent had been now many times postponed. The result of all this was that on March 10 Mr. Gandhi was arrested without any subsequent disorder.

It now remains to sum up the effects of his preaching. On the positive side there has been only one result, and that a temporary one. In the heyday of his ascendancy it seemed that the age-old breach between the Mohammedan and the Hindu had been closed: Hindus preached in Muslim mosques, and Mohammedans appeared in Hindu temples. Unfortunately, this unity was ephemeral, for long before Gandhi's arrest it was clear that the old hatreds were still rankling. The Moplah rebellion (*see note*, Chapter V, p. 75) sent reverberations throughout all India, and Mr. Gandhi could not convince Hindus that bigoted Mohammedans were to be commended

for wantonly attacking their unoffending Hindu neighbours. After Mr. Gandhi's arrest, the attitude of the Indian and British Governments on the Khilafat question and events in Turkey itself made Indian Mohammedans less inclined to fraternise with Hindus. In 1922–23 regrettable religious riots broke out in various parts of the country owing to the revival of missionary activities on both sides. The spirit of religious intolerance entered some of the provincial Legislatures to darken counsel, and render a difficult task more difficult.

On the negative side the count against Mr. Gandhi and his followers is long and heavy. Thousands of children and young people have lost opportunities of education through being withdrawn from good Government schools and sent to indifferent National ones. Frequently, indeed, this has meant that they have been denied education of any sort, for when the Government schools had been obliged to close, owing to the withdrawal of the pupils to attend the National schools, these schools, having achieved what seems to have been their main object, closed also.

Again, among the substantial classes the boycott of foreign cloth, and Mr. Gandhi's condemnation of industrialism in general, caused great financial losses, while the sacrifice entailed by acceptance of Mr. Gandhi's principles proved too great for Indian barristers, who derived substantial incomes from thriving practices. Indeed, all classes, although paying lip-homage to the ideal symbolised in the spinning-wheel, discovered practical drawbacks to the use of home-spun cloth.

Among the ignorant peasantry and lower classes of the cities the non-co-operation campaign had results even more disastrous. The preaching of disrespect for the Government, and disobedience to the laws, simply meant, for these people, license to steal and murder. It is impossible here to do more than enumerate a few of the terrible consequences. In the Punjab alone in 1920 there were 143 dacoities (*i.e.* robbery by armed bands) ; in 1921, 227 ; in 1922, 527. In the year ending March 1923, as the influence of non-co-operation waned, the power of the police increased, and the number of dacoities greatly decreased. In addition, there were 115 more murders in the year 1921–22, and 5000 more burglaries. During the same period the Military were called out 47 times to suppress seditious disorders. Here, again, marked reductions in these figures followed on the decline of the non-co-operation campaign. Considering many of Mr. Gandhi's utterances, these results are not surprising. "Good government," he said, "is no substitute for self-government. The Afghans have a bad government, but it is self-government, and I envy them." [1]

Among the devout and simple people of Sindh and the N.W. Provinces false stories of British insults to the Khalif and Christian desecration of Mecca and Medina, circulated by non-co-operators, induced over 18,000 people to sell all their worldly goods and start on a hopeless pilgrimage. They never reached the cities they wished to protect, but were turned back, by order of the Amir, on the Afghan frontier. Many of them found untimely graves on this disastrous

[1] Mahatma Gandhi, *Swaraj in One Year*, p. 16.

journey, and those who came back returned to penury and want, which the malign Government did its best to mitigate.

The frontier has been in almost continual eruption since 1919, though Mr. Gandhi can be held only partly responsible for this. In the Punjab the Akali movement, a strange mixture of religious fanaticism and political opportunism, was used by the non-co-operators for their own purposes. The extremists among the warlike Sikhs were led to dream of again establishing their rule over that part of India; they found the arguments of the emissaries of Gandhi convincing, for it seemed to them that none but a declining power would make concessions at a time when its grasp seemed to be weakening. In the United Provinces the non-co-operators gave the inevitable political bias to the "eka" movement—an agrarian movement similar, in many respects, to the English Peasants' Revolt in 1381. In South India, as has already been indicated, the preaching of non-co-operators was largely responsible for the Moplah rising, which it took a strong military force several months to suppress, and which shattered the apparent religious unity of Hindu and Mohammedan. Finally, in addition to the massacre of Chauri-Chaura already referred to, there have been many other violent outbreaks too numerous to mention, directly traceable to non-co-operation.

The most disastrous result of Mr. Gandhi's teaching, however, promises to be the most permanent. This is the stimulus he gave to racial antagonism. A century ago, this was almost unknown, but it seems to have grown with the increasing political consciousness

of Indians. With Mr. Gandhi and his followers references to racial hostility were the most favoured methods of rousing popular passion. "It is as amazing as it is humiliating that less than 100,000 white men can rule 315,000,000 Indians." [1] Statements like this, usually more violent, constantly recur in their speeches and writings. Non-co-operation may die out, and Mr. Gandhi confine himself wholly to social reform, but the evil he has done by thus stimulating this fierce, blind hatred, the hatred of one race for another, is incalculable.

After the arrest of Mr. Gandhi, although the Akali question continued to disturb the Punjab, there was a temporary lull in Indian politics. Once his powerful personality ceased to exercise its spell, grave centrifugal forces showed themselves. While a section, and that perhaps the most devout section of his followers, strove manfully to carry out the "constructive programme" of the vanished leader, the most practical group recognised its futility. This party set themselves the task of capturing the Congress machine and preparing the electorates for the elections. In this work the absence of the Mahatma proved to be fortunate for them, for without being embarrassed by his insistence on the boycotts, they could now come before the people as his representatives. Mr. C. R. Das, in particular, proclaimed himself the Elisha on whose shoulders the mantle of the Prophet had fallen. By September 1923 the Swarajists, as this party now called itself to distinguish it from the Non-co-operators, were able to capture the Congress

[1] Mahatma Gandhi, *Swaraj in One Year*, p. 16.

machine. With it in their hands, and the great name of Gandhi to conjure with, the elections of 1923 returned the victorious Swarajists in large numbers.

In contrast to the hysterical vagaries of non-co-operation has been the sound political sense shown by the Liberals, or Moderates, both in their annual Conference and in the new Councils. This party, while quite as determined to champion Indian rights, has always preferred to achieve its purpose by constitutional methods. Led by such men as the Rt. Hon. Srinavasa Sastri and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the Moderates have proved to the world that Indians can and do understand the responsibilities and limitations of democratic government. Unfortunately their attitude has not always been consistent, and in some cases they have shown deplorable weakness.

Although strenuous attempts were made by the Non-co-operators in 1921 to boycott the elections, the movement was a failure. Only in six cases out of 637 was an election impossible owing to the absence of a candidate.[1] In fact, this boycott proved a blessing in disguise, for it left the field free to the Moderates who were everywhere returned. It was undoubtedly due to the overwhelming majority of this party in the Councils returned by the elections of 1920 that it was possible to work the new system of government with any success.

In the Provincial Councils good work was done. An examination of their records shows that a very wide field of legislation was covered—from Local Self-Government Acts to Prevention of Cruelty to

[1] *India in* 1920, p. 65.

Animals, from Education to Amusements Tax Act, from Revenue to Prevention of Gambling, from Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act to Midwives and Nurses Act, and so on. The debates on the whole were marked by moderation and a real grasp of the questions at issue, although sometimes, as has already been stated, the spectres of religious bigotry and racialism have appeared to darken counsel. As might have been expected in a body unused to responsibility, the elected members of the Provincial Councils were disinclined to face the odium of unpopular legislation, such as increased taxation, but this is an inevitable symptom of infancy which, it is to be hoped, will disappear with time.

The sessions of the first Imperial Legislature were equally satisfactory. In a surprisingly short time a genuinely parliamentary atmosphere was produced, and members made remarkable progress in parliamentary habits and modes of thinking. It is no exaggeration to say that the first Indian Legislature will bear comparison with any newly established representative body in other parts of the world, though it must be acknowledged that a good deal of the success was due to the tact and sympathy with which the first Home Member, Sir William Vincent, discharged his very difficult task. Here, again, the records show a very creditable amount of legislative activity. " The mere fact that the Legislature has succeeded within two years in repealing the Press Acts and many ' repressive laws ' ; in altering the Fiscal policy, in removing racial distinctions in criminal trials ; in securing effective retrenchment ;

in opening the way for the nationalisation of the railways; for the Indianisation of the Army; and for the creation of a Territorial force is a sufficient answer to those who mistrust Indian capacity for self-government." [1] In addition to actual work achieved the free and frank discussion of many difficult questions, and the readiness of Government to accept suggestions, went far to convince those who still mistrusted the sincerity of Great Britain.

The very fact that Indian Moderates, in the face of almost incredible vilification, were able to achieve this record, is no small tribute to their ability and to their courage. Even if there had been no non-co-operation movement the task before the first Reformed Indian Councils would have been sufficiently difficult. In the Imperial Government there was a deficit for five years in succession, and the Provinces suffered from similar financial embarrassment. Yet, in spite of all this, a serious constitutional crisis occurred only twice. They both arose over the certifying power vested by the Act in the Viceroy. This power was used first in the case of the Protection of Princes Act, which Government felt pledged to support. The raising of the Salt Tax caused the second certification. The arguments put forward by both sides seem almost equally convincing. If Indian loans were to be successfully raised, the Indian Budget had to be balanced, but it is difficult not to sympathise with the attitude of the elected members: their opponents were bitter, the raising of the Salt Tax would make a splendid electioneering cry, and the

[1] *India in* 1922–23, p. 296.

elections were near. The three years of steady work of the Liberals, however, their loyal co-operation with the Government, and their honest attempt to work the new system were proclaimed by Mr. C. R. Das and his friends as so many proofs that they were bought. In India, even more than in other countries, the monotonous recital of sound legislative work proves far less effective in capturing votes than fiery and emotional appeals to windy abstractions. At the elections, therefore, in 1923 the Moderates suffered for their inferior organisation, for their failure to educate the electorate, and for their sanity. Their opponents captured half the elected seats in the Indian Legislative Assembly, and the majority of seats in the Legislative Council of the Central Provinces, and established their control in Bengal. In the other Provinces, however, they failed to secure more than a small minority of seats.

The victorious party at once brought Dyarchy to a standstill in the Central Provinces and, later on, in Bengal. At Delhi the new Assembly proved to be a very inferior body to its predecessor, its only distinction being the unrivalled knowledge of the arts of political obstruction evinced by Mr. C. R. Das and his friends. A fair sample of the sort of speaking that now became usual was afforded by one member, who denounced the British on the ground that they had failed to remove poverty from the people and to protect them from influenza and other epidemics. This orgy of political incompetence and oratorical fervour culminated in the rejection of the Budget of 1924.

In the meantime, the words of Mr. Gandhi and the policy of Mr. C. R. Das and his friends were beginning to bear fruit. The boycott of schools and the preaching of sedition had their inevitable result in stimulating overwrought young men to become assassins. At the same time, the trial at Cawnpore showed that revolutionary agencies, inspired by the Bolshevists, were active in the country. To the surprise even of Mr. Gandhi, Mr. C. R. Das apparently eulogised the assassin, and it is impossible now to say what may be the results of his oft-repeated sanctions.

In February 1924, much to the confusion of the Swarajists, Mr. Gandhi was released from prison. It soon became clear that in setting themselves up as the prophet's spokesmen, and in stating that they had received soul-messages of approbation from him, the Swarajists had been masquerading under false colours. Mr. Gandhi came out of prison more determined than ever to insist upon his fivefold boycott—boycott of the Councils, boycott of schools, boycott of foreign cloth, of titles, and of Law Courts. After vainly attempting to arrive at a working compromise, the inevitable breach occurred at the meeting of the All-India National Congress Committee at the end of June 1924, largely as a result of Hindu-Moslem tension, which had again become acute.[1] Consequently, for a moment the Liberals and Government officials were given a breathing-space, while the Congress Press, now divided against itself, indulged in mutual recrimination.

In this very short space it is impossible to do more

[1] *Round Table*, December 1924.

than scratch the surface of the Indian question. Innumerable cross-currents and important questions of many kinds have been left out, and it may well be that the result seems distorted. The aim, however, here is not to give a complete analysis of the Indian question—a task which would require many volumes—but merely to give some slight indication of its vastness and complexity, in order that in later chapters it may be possible to bring out the tremendous responsibilities to India of the rest of the Empire.

Some conclusions would, however, appear to be fairly obvious :

1. India at the present time is caught in two tremendous currents which run in opposite directions—the reaction of the East from the West and the attempt of the East to imitate the West. Mr. Gandhi represents Oriental reaction. The Constitutionalists represent the opposite point of view, and the Swarajists, if they are anything positive, are a strange blending of these two currents.
2. Religion plays a part in Indian life which is unknown in the West; if indeed such a thing is possible, it may be said that there is too much religion in India—perhaps it would be truer to say there is too much religiosity, for many of the things which are classified under the heading of religion in India would appear under far different categories elsewhere. The religious group appears to be almost the only permanent group in the country, and any political organisation which does not recog-

nise this is bound to meet with disaster. Minorities in India have come to stay, and in working out representative government in that country some method must be devised by which their rights can be safeguarded.

3. It seems fairly evident that Indians as a whole are not particularly interested in representative government; they are interested in self-government. At the same time, it is equally obvious that those who are now speaking for India represent only a small fraction of its population. Politicians are mainly drawn from two castes—the Brahmins and the traders, and even in these small groups there is an overwhelming representation of the legal interest. If self-government is ever to become a reality in India, the warrior-class, the low-caste man, and the outcaste must also have their place.
4. The Swarajists have shown considerable powers of party discipline and their knowledge of political obstruction is unrivalled. It is impossible, however, to hold that these qualities afford any justification for further extensions of self-government. So far that party has been entirely lacking in the necessary spirit of compromise, and has shown an almost complete absence of self-control, and of the power to form a constructive policy.
5. It is wrong to assume, as many do to-day, that Dyarchy has failed. The Act of 1919 was designed to work, provided all sides showed a

willingness to co-operate. So far, with the exception of the Liberals, there has been a complete lack of co-operation, but the work of the Liberals (no matter what the defects of that party may be) shows that there is a common-sense group in India, and that Indians can work representative institutions.

6. It is inevitable that representative government in India will take on many characteristics which are unknown to it in the West. Indians do not value efficiency, speed, and reliability as much as do Englishmen, and in dealing with India these fundamental differences must always be taken into consideration.

7 To the impartial observer the motto of " Hasten slowly " would seem to be peculiarly *à propos* for India at the present time. The demand that further extensions of self-government must be made at once in spite of the Act of 1919 appears to be unreasonable. A delay of ten years between the first and second instalments of representative government is nothing when the whole course of Indian history is remembered. If Indians will study the constitutional history of Great Britain and the self-governing Dominions, they will discover that between the separate instalments of representative institutions of the British peoples there always intervened probationary periods far longer than ten years.

8. In the meantime there is great need for education in India on a scale not yet attempted—educa-

tion not only of the young in schools and colleges, but education of the adult elector, and Indians who sincerely desire their country's good can set themselves no more patriotic undertaking.

The British Empire is here given the opportunity of solving not only an international but an inter-racial problem, and no people in history has ever been given a heavier or a nobler task.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE RELATIONS OF INDIA TO THE CROWN COLONIES AND PROTECTORATES

"THE relations of India to England" would perhaps be a better title for this chapter, for there is no doubt that Indians believe that in dealing with the Crown Colonies [1] and Protectorates [2] they are dealing with England. They know that the Mother-country is directly responsible for the government of these countries, and they are therefore prepared to blame England for any disabilities under which their countrymen may labour.

India is concerned with the Crown Colonies and Protectorates mainly in connection with the question of immigration, and the status of Indians domiciled there. During the nineteenth century numbers of Indians went to Trinidad and British Guiana as indentured labourers, and later settled there. In the course of time they came to comprise a considerable element in the colonial population. Mr. Wood, in his Report on the West Indies, estimates that 33 per cent.

[1] *Crown Colony*. A Colony in which the Crown is ultimately responsible for the government, though there may or may not be a Legislative Council, partially elected.

[2] *Protectorate*. A country in which Great Britain assumes advisory and other responsibilities for its good government.

of the population of Trinidad, and 42 per cent. of the population of British Guiana are Indian.[1] They are the backbone of the agricultural industry, and though they suffer politically on account of their illiteracy in English, and the multiplicity of their own languages, their position is, on the whole, satisfactory, and their relations with the other inhabitants of these colonies amicable.

A colony of Indians has also settled in Fiji. According to the 1921 census returns for the colony, it appears that there are 60,634 Indians out of a total population of 157,266. The Indian population is only exceeded in size by that of the natives.[2] While the Indian has certain grievances in Fiji, these are due to no feelings of racial antagonism or restrictions placed upon him for special reasons, but to adverse economic conditions, more particularly the collapse of the sugar industry. From the attitude of the Colonial Government, and from the fact that the majority of those who were repatriated in 1921 speedily returned to Fiji, it seems fairly clear that the existing grievances are not serious. This colony, however, is comparatively small, and the number of Indians it can absorb will never be large.[3]

Ceylon, Malaya, and Mauritius welcome Indian immigrants, and these countries may yet prove to be valuable fields for Indian colonisation. Indians have also migrated to Tanganyika, Kenya Colony, and Uganda. Tanganyika, however, since it is a

[1] Cmd. 1679, p. 67.

[2] *Colonial Reports Annual*, No. 1130, Fiji, 1921.

[3] Cmd. 1988, p. 79; *India in* 1921–22, pp. 27–28; *India in* 1922–23, p. 17.

mandated territory,[1] does not concern us here, but it should be pointed out that, as India is herself a member of the League of Nations, it is impossible to raise particular barriers against her in such territories. This is true of all mandated territories, including those now administered by South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. "These sparsely populated tracts must have colonists, and in that colonisation India is entitled to have her share. It is to be hoped that the Dominions concerned will recognise the justice of her contention. To any reasonable measure of protection of native interests which is strictly impartial in its scope, India will never object. Against invidious measures she feels she must protest." [2]

In Uganda Indian settlers have been welcomed, and have already played an honourable part in its development. "The country owes much to the Indian trader, and we consider that a broad policy of toleration should be adopted toward him. He has shown energy and enterprise, and has assisted in the opening-up of the more remote districts. He is also of value as an agriculturist, and his activities in this direction might well be encouraged." [3]

In what is now known as Kenya Colony (formerly British East Africa) the same happy conditions do not at present prevail. Since the Kenya dispute is

[1] *Mandated territory*. This term is applied to the late German colonies, which are now administered, under Mandate from the League of Nations, by one or other of the Allied Powers, who are responsible to the League of Nations for its government.

[2] *India in* 1922–23, p. 12.

[3] Quoted from a *Report of the Uganda Development Commission* in Cmd. 1311.

the best possible illustration of one of the most serious problems which the British Empire must face, it is proposed to deal with it at some length. It must be remembered, however, that the problem in Kenya is not an isolated one, and that the same trouble must always arise wherever in future people of different races, with different standards of life and different traditions, meet together.

Kenya Colony has a total area of approximately 240,000 square miles. It stretches from Mombasa on the coast to Kisumu on the shores of Victoria Nyanza, and it is bounded on the south by Tanganyika, and on the north by Somaliland, Abyssinia, and the Soudan.[1] Of its total area it is estimated that 195,000 square miles is below an altitude of 4000 feet, and is therefore unfit for permanent white settlement. Between forty and fifty thousand square miles is situated in what is known as "the Highlands." This tract varies in altitude from 5000 feet upwards.[2] Its cool and healthy climate, its great agricultural possibilities, and its abundance of game, make it a land attractive to men of means with a love for an open-air life.

From very early times India has had trade-relations with the east coast of Africa. "It was the Sikh soldier who bore an honourable part in the conquest and pacification of these East African countries. It is the Indian trader who, penetrating and maintaining himself in all sorts of places to which no white man would go, or in which no white man could earn a living, has more than anyone else developed the

[1] *Round Table*, March 1922. [2] *Ibid.*, June 1923.

early beginnings of trade and opened up the first slender means of communication. It was by Indian labour that the one vital railway, upon which everything else depends, was constructed. It is the Indian banker who supplies perhaps the larger part of capital yet available for business and enterprise, and to whom the white settlers have not hesitated to repair for financial aid. The Indian was here long before the first British official. He may point to as many generations of useful industry on the coast and inland as the white settlers . . . can count years of residence." [1] But, while this is true, it is necessary to point out that before the British came, Indians never penetrated beyond the coast area; in spite of their long connection with the country they did nothing by themselves to develop it or to civilise the natives. In the main the Indians who have settled in Kenya are clerks, small traders, and artisans, with a sprinkling of large traders and professional men.

Kenya first came under British control in 1890. In 1895 it passed from the British Imperial East African Company to the British Foreign Office, and in 1908 was handed over to the Colonial Office. In 1920 it ceased to be a Protectorate, and under the name "Kenya Colony" became a Crown Colony.

During the 'nineties a few white settlers appeared in the Protectorate. After 1902, thanks to the encouragement given by the Government, their numbers steadily increased. Almost from the beginning, it appears that the European and Indian colonists came

[1] Mr. Churchill's "East African Journey," quoted in *India in* 1922–23, p. 13.

into collision, resulting from their different political traditions, their different social habits, and their different economic standards. Among the early causes of hostility the reservation of the Highlands for white settlers was the most important. As this area was the only one in the country fit for regular white settlement, Lord Elgin in 1906 approved the action of the Commissioner in limiting the grant of agricultural lands there to Europeans. In 1908 he confirmed this decision: "Grants of land in the Upland areas should not as a matter of administrative convenience be made to Asiatics." [1]

When the Protectorate came under the control of the Colonial Office, it was decided to add an unofficial Indian to the Legislative Council, but later on this policy was discontinued. Naturally, this gave rise to great dissatisfaction in the Indian community. The publication of a report in 1913, which recommended racial segregation on grounds of health and social convenience, served still further to embitter Indian feeling.

During the War a surprisingly large proportion of the European settlers were on active service. Though a few of the Indians enlisted, the majority, not being members of the fighting races, remained at home and improved their economic position. The widespread disinclination on the part of the Indians to take up arms served still further to widen the gulf between the two races. Again, certain disparaging paragraphs referring to the Kenya Indians, contained in the report of a Local Economic Commission of

[1] Cmd. 1922, p. 16.

Enquiry, added still another cause of friction. The Indians, although they did not themselves take part in the struggle, were very proud of the military achievements of their countrymen, and they perhaps went unduly far in assuming to themselves some of the reflected glory. At the same time, the improved position in India's status, both in the Empire and in the world at large, gave them a rather exaggerated idea of their own importance.

After the War, many causes combined to make the Kenya situation more and more critical. The Governor in March 1919, in reply to an Indian delegation, is reported to have stated : " The principle has been accepted at home that this country is primarily for European development, and that, whereas the interests of the Indians will not be lost sight of, in all respects the interests of the Europeans must predominate " ; and again : " While Indian interests should not be lost sight of, European interests must predominate throughout the Protectorate." [1]

These and other statements of the sort, coupled with the appearance of a number of soldier settlers, convinced the Indians that the whole country was to be reserved for the white man. Further, the acceptance by Lord Milner of the proposal to admit elected European members to the Legislative Council seemed to afford an additional proof of white supremacy.

Lord Milner attempted to settle the outstanding questions in Kenya, and published his decisions on May 21, 1920. He laid down the following principles :

[1] Cmd. 1922, p. 5.

1. Indians were to be elected to the Legislative Council and to Municipal Councils on a special franchise.
2. No unfair discrimination against Indians was to be allowed in the Immigration Laws of the Colony.
3. The Highlands were to be reserved for white settlers, but agricultural lands of a good quality were to be set aside for Indians in other areas.
4. The principle of race segregation was to be maintained in residential areas and if possible in commercial areas as well.

A storm of opposition at once arose from the Indian community, and on August 22, 1920, a meeting of Indians, held at Nairobi, the capital, loudly denounced these decisions. They protested against the inferior status assigned by the Milner decisions to the Indian community; they complained of the inadequate representation Lord Milner suggested; they denounced the policy of race segregation, and the restrictions placed by Lord Milner on the ownership of lands by members of their community.

By this time, however, the Kenya dispute was causing reverberations far beyond the boundaries of the Colony. India, at the time seething with political and emotional activity, due partly to her improved political status, and partly also to the Gandhi propaganda, made the cause of the Kenya Indians her own, for on this one question all classes and creeds and shades of political opinion were united. In October 1920 the Indian Government therefore took up the

question. It laid down the principle that "there is no justification in a Crown Colony or Protectorate for assigning to British Indians a status in any way inferior to that of any other class of His Majesty's subjects." [1] This being the case, it was impossible, considering the respective numbers of the European and Indian communities, to explain why the Europeans should require eleven elected representatives on the Legislative Council and the Indians only two. Even-handed justice demanded that the representation of the two communities and the method of election should be assimilated. The Indian Government therefore suggested that a common electoral roll,[2] and a common franchise on a property basis with an educational test without racial discrimination, should be adopted. This principle should be applied both in the Colonial and in the Municipal elections. They contended that compulsory segregation was not only a badge of racial inferiority, but that it would almost certainly mean that the Indians would receive inferior sites for settlement, and that this policy must therefore be repudiated. The objects which the policy of segregation were supposed to further might be attained, without rousing racial passions, through proper building, sanitary, and police regulations. As to the restrictions on the purchase and ownership of agricultural land, the Indian Government stated: "We are unable to agree that the Indian claim to be allowed to acquire agricultural land anywhere in the Colony is

[1] Cmd. 1311, p. 2.

[2] *Common electoral roll.* One in which all qualified persons, irrespective of race, would be entered.

neither just nor reasonable"[1]; and if, as had been suggested, this question as it affected the Highlands reduced itself to one of climate, "We would urge that it be left to the climate to decide."[2]

India regarded the Kenya question as a test of her own position in the Empire. It was pointed out that for the sake of Imperial unity in 1918 she had accepted a Reciprocity Resolution which had practically excluded her from the self-governing Dominions. She would never agree, however, to the application of the same principle to a Crown Colony, especially to one in which she had always had a special interest. The restrictions on the activities of Indians were made the more galling by the fact that in Tanganyika, where Indians were protected by the Covenant of the League of Nations, Lord Milner's decision did not apply. "It seems to us to be an impossible position that British Indians in a British colony should be subjected to disabilities to which they cannot be subjected in an adjoining mandated territory." This despatch concluded by stating: "The Indian Government cannot and will not disclaim responsibility for the welfare of Indians who are settled in East Africa."[3]

During the next two years this vexed question became more and more acute. Extremists in Kenya on both sides did much to embitter the quarrel. Their violent speeches, their propaganda based upon racial antagonism, their economic boycotts, and their threats of violence and retaliation, went far to make a settlement acceptable to all concerned impossible. In

[1] Cmd. 1311, p. 9. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 9. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

India the political agitator found in this subject a new and valuable weapon with which to attack, with telling effect, the already over-embarrassed Indian Government. For purposes of anti-British agitation, the Kenya question proved almost as valuable to him as the "Khilafat wrong" or the "Punjab martyrs."[1] Unfortunately, these feelings of humiliation were not confined to the political agitator. The Bombay Corporation, one of the richest bodies in India, passed a resolution on November 18, 1922, that in view of the humiliating treatment of His Majesty's subjects by the Governments of certain Dominions and Crown Colonies, the Bombay Municipal Corporation would place no insurance with companies registered in those Dominions or Colonies, would invest no funds in banks there registered, and would employ no person born in those localities in the capacity of agent, contractor, or servant.[2]

In addition to this, there have been many other manifestations of the tremendous importance which Indians attach to this subject. It came up several times in the Indian Legislature, where members of all parties united in denouncing the existing Colonial policy. On February 27, 1923, a resolution was passed by the Delhi Assembly, requesting the Indian Government to convey to His Majesty's Government an expression of India's grave dissatisfaction with the position of Indians in Kenya. It also demanded that equality of Indians and Europeans should be recog-

[1] *India in* 1922–23, pp. 13, 14; Cmd. 1988, p. 75; *The Times*, January 22 and 23, 1923, and February 10 and 28, 1923.

[2] *India in* 1922–23, p. 18; also *The Times*, November 18, 1922.

nised and that adequate protection of the Indians should be provided against the Europeans.

Many retaliatory resolutions have also been brought forward in the Indian Legislature. Among other things these resolutions proposed to apply to Colonial subjects resident in India the same restrictions applied to Indian nationals in the Colonies and Dominions. The doubling of the duties on Colonial produce and the prohibition on Colonial ships to Indian ports have also been suggested.[1]

Lord Milner's two successors at the Colonial Office, Mr. Churchill and the Duke of Devonshire, each in turn put forward schemes of settlement. In July 1921 the Joint Standing Committee on Indian Affairs presented its report to Parliament. It suggested that, since it was impossible to come to any conclusion without more first-hand knowledge, an impartial Committee should be appointed which should go into the whole question and make recommendations. Almost at the same time the subject came up for consideration at the Conference of Prime Ministers, but nothing resulted, and difficulties went on increasing. An Indian and a European delegation arrived in London at the end of 1921, and were received by Mr. Churchill. That Minister, in his speech at the East African Banquet in London (January 1922), made certain statements which filled the Indian community in Kenya with dismay: "You have an Indian question there which is a burning question. No doubt you know that we have laid down the principle that, so far as is practicable, colour is not by itself to be a

[1] *The Times*, June 1923.

bar. . . . We wish to apply broadly and comprehensively Rhodes' principle of equal rights for all civilised men. That means that natives and Indians alike, who reach and conform to well-marked European standards, shall not be denied the fullest exercise and enjoyment of civic and political rights. The standard to be adopted is obviously a matter in which the European community have a right to be fully consulted. All future immigration of Indians shall be strictly regulated, and the same principle of equal rights and conditions for all civilised men shall rule in respect of Immigration Laws as in all others. We do not contemplate any settlement or system which will prevent British East Africa, or Kenya, as it is now known, from becoming a distinctly British colony, looking forward in full fruition of time to complete responsible government."

In September 1922 Mr. Churchill put forward a scheme of settlement. He suggested a common electoral roll for all British subjects, and the qualifications of voters should be on a property or educational franchise, so arranged as to admit approximately 10 per cent. of the Indians. All Europeans then resident in the Colony were to be given the franchise, but new voters were to be admitted only if they possessed the required qualifications. The official majority was to be retained on the Legislative Council, and the policy of appointing at least one nominated Indian on the Executive Council was to be continued. When, however, Mr. Churchill fell from office the problem was still as acute as ever.

In the following January his successor put forward

another scheme, the so-called "Wood-Winterton plan." While this scheme in certain respects was more favourable to the Indians it proved abortive, and on the invitation of the Colonial Office two delegations, representing the Indian and European communities respectively, came to London to discuss a plan of settlement. At the same time, the native interest was represented by a missionary, and the Indian Legislature despatched a delegation to represent the point of view of the Indian Government. After prolonged discussions, the Colonial Office finally decided upon a policy which it set forth in the so-called Kenya White Paper, July 1923.[1]

It is plain that no settlement could have been satisfactory to all parties concerned. While, however, the policy enunciated entailed certain sacrifices, both from Europeans and Indians, it was a bold attempt to do substantial justice.

It is laid down that the Crown Colony form of government and the official majority must be retained—thus, the Europeans were obliged to forego the hope which many of them had long entertained, and which Mr. Churchill had fostered, that at no distant time Kenya would be given responsible government. The policy of segregation upon which many Europeans had set their hearts, while still retained for the natives, was abandoned for Asiatics. The Immigration Laws, which many of them had hoped would be so framed as to exclude further Indian immigration, were to be administered primarily in the interests of the native, irrespective of considerations of race. The

[1] Cmd. 1922.

Indian and European interests were to be represented on the Board which would have control of immigration. There is no doubt that this settlement required the Europeans to make many sacrifices which to them appeared considerable, and it is to their lasting honour that, in spite of this fact, they loyally accepted the decision.

The Indians, for their part, were denied many of their demands. They were not given equal representation with Europeans on the Legislative Council; as against the eleven elected seats now allotted to the European community, the Indians were given five. Further, their demand for a common electoral roll was refused. It was decided that both in the Colonial and Municipal elections a communal franchise should prevail, and the only important qualification insisted upon was that members must be able to speak English. Lastly, contrary to their hopes, the Highlands were still to be retained for European settlers, but good agricultural areas in the Lowlands were to be set aside for Indian development.

The British Government made it clear throughout that the paramount interest to be considered in Kenya was neither European nor Indian, but native. Whenever the claims of the latter conflicted with those of the other two communities, the interests of the natives must prevail. " In the administration of Kenya His Majesty's Government regard themselves as exercising a trust on behalf of the African population, and they are unable to delegate or share this trust—the object of which may be defined as the protection and the advancement of the native races." The education of

the natives, their political, moral, and economic advancement must always be a primary consideration. "As in Uganda Protectorate, so in Kenya Colony, the principle of Trusteeship for the natives . . . is unassailable. This paramount duty of Trusteeship will continue as in the past to be carried out under the Secretary of State for the Colonies, by the agents of the Imperial Government and by them alone." Considering that the native population amounts to between two and a half and three millions, as against approximately ten thousand Europeans and twenty thousand Indians, the justice of this decision cannot be open to question.

Although the settlement fell far short of their original demands, as has been stated Europeans in Kenya accepted it loyally. The reply of the Indians, on the other hand, was to boycott the Councils, to carry on a more violent agitation than ever, and to adopt a general policy of non-co-operation. The Indians undoubtedly have just grievances, but they have done much, by their short-sighted policy since July 1923, to make their claims, however just, almost impossible of realisation. The reservation of the Highlands for white settlers is undoubtedly open to criticism as was suggested by the Indian Government; since apparently it reduced itself to a question of climate, the climate should be left to decide. Further, as the official majority is still to be retained, there seems to be no obvious reason for allotting to the Europeans almost twice the number of elected members given to the Indians on the Legislative Council.

Against this, however, it must be remembered that

the Indians have won substantial victories. The old fear of unjust Immigration Laws has been removed, and the policy of segregation, which to them seems so insulting, has been abandoned. Lastly, considering that in India a large section of enlightened opinion is firmly convinced that the communal franchise must continue, the extension of that policy to a country similarly situated as regards its divisions cannot be considered the monstrous injustice which it has been represented. A lamentable feature of this whole dispute has been the almost entire lack among the Indians of a political sense, and the realisation of what representative institutions entail. They demand representative institutions, and at the same time show clearly that they are completely lacking in that spirit of compromise on political questions which alone makes those institutions workable. It would have been much wiser for the Kenya Indians if, like their European opponents, they had accepted these decisions, while recording their dissatisfaction. In time it might well have happened that, having entered the Councils, they would have so mollified racial antipathies that their original claims would have been acceded to as a matter of course.

It is no matter for surprise that the cry of equality which has been so persistently raised by the Indians has been regarded by the Europeans as absurd; especially on the lips of Brahmins this is a strange manifestation of inconsistency—an inconsistency which Indians themselves are now beginning to realise. "Tirades against inequality become absolutely grotesque when they proceed from the Rt. Hon. S. V.

Sastri, who like myself is a member of the South Indian Brahmin hierarchy, which has done everything in the past to degrade the lower classes, and is at present doing nothing to elevate them. In parts of South India millions of Indians are regarded as untouchable and unapproachable. They are not allowed to enter the village temples or to use the village wells. We who live in glass houses ought not to throw stones ! " [1]

The vastness of the issues at stake in Kenya is out of all proportion to the numbers of the two communities engaged. As in most political disputes it is a quarrel not of right against wrong, but of right against right. The European, the Indian, and the native has each his just claim to put forward, and somehow the British Empire must find a way of doing substantial justice to all. It seems abundantly clear that the native in Kenya has suffered even more severely than the Indian, and it will be a blemish on the British Commonwealth if the economic conditions which have entailed these injustices should be allowed to continue. As far as possible the same principles which have worked such happy results in West Africa should be applied to Kenya.[2] The task is difficult, but the object to be attained is worthy of the greatest effort ; a lasting settlement can only be achieved through a spirit of compromise and surrender on all sides. This is the price of inter-racial harmony and world-peace—and surely it is not too great a price to pay.

[1] Letter from P. N. Ramaswami, *The Times*, August 7, 1923.
[2] Norman Leys, *Kenya*.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RELATIONS OF INDIA TO THE SELF-GOVERNING DOMINIONS

It now remains to consider the other phase of this question—the relations of India to the self-governing Dominions. Though the issues involved are much the same as those which have just been considered, the general position with regard to them is almost entirely different. For the government of the Crown Colonies the Parliament of Great Britain is responsible, and their immigration policies must be determined by the Colonial Office. The self-governing Dominions and India are now partner-nations with Great Britain in the Empire, enjoying a quasi-international personality. In a sense, then, the problem of Dominion and Indian relations has already emerged from the purely domestic stage. On the success of the attempt to reconcile the conflicting interests of these two sections of the Empire hangs not only the future of the Empire itself, but also, to a large extent, the possibility of future inter-racial peace.

So far, the only question of importance which has brought India and the Dominions into contact with each other is Indian immigration. By the end of the nineteenth century this problem had already become

acute in the Dominions. As their population grew, they became concerned about the human material out of which the new nations which were arising were to be fashioned. Writing in 1892, the Australian statesman, Sir Henry Parkes, expressed an opinion on this subject, which then prevailed, and still does prevail, amongst Dominion statesmen: "No advantage to employés, no convenience to a limited number of citizens, can compensate for loosening the consanguineous ties which bind a State together. If we may speak of statesmanship, there is yet another and a higher ground of objection. In founding a free State no nationality or class should be considered which we are not prepared to admit to all our franchises, all our rights or property, all our privileges of citizenship, all our social usages and trusts, not excluding intermarriage." [1]

Down to the last quarter of the nineteenth century the white communities of the Pacific had been able to develop in perfect security. Their peace of mind had first been disturbed by the appearance in the 'eighties of Germany as a colonising power, but this shock was quickly succeeded by a far greater one due to the sudden rise of Japan. Almost in the space of a single night, as it appeared to them, that country had emerged from her traditional seclusion and made gigantic strides in the development of her shipping and wealth, and taken her place among the great Powers. Her easy victory over China gave her the hegemony of the Orient, and her defeat of Russia marked the beginning of a new period in world-history. It is impossible to

[1] Sir H. Parkes, *Fifty Years in the Making of Australia*, vol. ii., p. 207.

over-estimate the effect produced by these events upon the Oriental mind. Japan could play the white man's game in business, politics and war, and beat him—the East need no longer bow down before the West, for the spell of the white man had been broken ; he was no longer invincible.

The scattered white communities of the Pacific and Indian Oceans were almost equally affected by these events, though in a far different way. The old condition of happy security was gone for ever, and every Oriental, whether Japanese, Chinese, or Indian, became an object of suspicion from Johannesburg to Vancouver. Though Indians had been settled in South Africa for centuries, it was not until the 'seventies that their numbers became considerable. From then onward both the Indian and the Colonial Governments encouraged Indian indentured labourers to go to Natal, where their efforts were largely responsible for the development of the sugar and tea industries. At the same time, Indians were settling in different parts of Australia and New Zealand, and by 1900 they had appeared in British Columbia. The growing fear of the Oriental is manifested by a mass of anti-Oriental legislation in the statute-books of these Dominions.[1]

The new-born pride of the Indian was deeply wounded by this anti-racial legislation. Between 1900 and 1910 Mr. Gandhi was winning his spurs in South Africa in the cause of Indian equality, and Indian public opinion was deeply stirred by his speeches and his courage. The sufferings, real and imaginary, of

[1] Keith's *Responsible Government of the Dominions*, vol. ii., chap. 4, p. 1078.

their fellow countrymen in South Africa became the familiar theme of the Indian agitator. All classes of India were united in their resentment against this treatment, as was stated by the Memorandum circulated by the Indian Government at the Imperial Conference of 1911: "The gravity of the friction between India and the Dominions lies in this—that on the Colonial question and on that alone are united the seditious agitator and the absolutely loyal representatives of moderate Indian opinion." [1]

The subject had been discussed at the Colonial Conference of 1897. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain on that occasion had pointed out to the Colonial representatives the dangers of ill-tempered legislation, and recommended to the other Colonies the system which had recently been adopted in Natal, where practical exclusion was achieved by insistence upon a language test. Such a policy, he pointed out, would not inflict unnecessary insults upon Oriental peoples, because of their race and colour. "To exclude by reason of their race or colour all Her Majesty's Indian subjects or even all Asiatics would be an act so offensive to those peoples that it would be most painful, I am quite certain, to Her Majesty to have to sanction it." [2]

In spite of this discussion, however, the problem continued to become more and more serious. It was raised at the Imperial Conference of 1907, but nothing resulted. At the Imperial Conference of 1911 Lord Crewe, Secretary of State for India, speaking on behalf

[1] Cd. 5746–1, p. 277.

[2] C. 8596 (1897), p. 12, quoted in Keith's *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, p. 275.

of the Indian and the British Governments, made an impartial statement of the existing situation. He pointed out that while between the Dominions and the Mother-country there was no question which could not be settled by good-will and good sense on both sides, this particular question, as it affected India and the Dominions, seemed to be almost insoluble. It threatened not only the well-being but the very existence of the Empire. He frankly recognised that the Dominions must always have the right of determining the sort of people they were prepared to accept as citizens. Nevertheless, he suggested that this right should be so enforced as to give the least possible reason for the passion of racialism. In the Memorandum which was circulated by the Indian Government, it was suggested that the Dominions had not hitherto thoroughly considered their responsibilities to the rest of the Empire, and that they had done little to ensure that their domestic policies "should not unnecessarily create embarrassment in the administration of India." [1]

The Dominion representatives, while sympathising with the difficulties in which the Governments of India and the Mother-country were placed, were united in their determination to keep their countries for white development. From the discussions it appeared there were at that time three phases of this question: (1) The admission of new Indian immigrants; (2) the status and condition of those who had already been allowed to enter the Dominions; (3) the employment of Indians on ships trading with the Dominions. On the first of

[1] Cd. 5746–1, p. 277.

these questions there was apparently little difficulty ; the Dominions were determined to stop a further influx of Indians to their shores, and the British Government frankly accepted this policy. " It is useless to attempt to veil the fact that the policy of building-up new nations of European blood within the Empire is absolutely incompatible with the idea that any British subject, whatever his race, shall have full right of ingress to any part of the Empire." [1]

This went far to allay the fears of the Dominions, and to make possible a more reasonable treatment of the remaining questions. As will be seen later, the status of Indians domiciled in the Dominions continued to give rise to friction, but the employment of Indians on ships trading with them was apparently dropped, for nothing more is heard of the question.

No Imperial Conference met in 1915, and much water had run under the bridge before the Imperial War Conference met in 1917. The Empire had entered upon a life and death struggle, the issue of which was still in that year in doubt ; a struggle in which India was playing an honourable part. For the moment, the fear of the Oriental was replaced in the mind of the Dominions by the fear of German Imperialism. The atmosphere was therefore on the whole more favourable than it had yet been for a sane consideration of the question. India had become a great fighting power—Indian blood and treasure had been freely poured out in the cause of the Allies, and for the first time Indian representatives were present at the Conference.

The demands made by India in 1917 were moderate.

[1] Cd. 5746–1, p. 276.

Indians domiciled in the Dominions should not be less favourably treated than other Asiatics, and the greatest possible facilities should be given educated Indians for purposes of study, trade, and travel, though not for permanent settlement. A Memorandum on the subject was circulated, in which the Indian members put forward specific suggestions. After an informal exchange of opinions and some considerable discussion, the following resolution was passed: "The Imperial War Conference, having examined the Memorandum on the position of Indians resident in the self-governing Dominions presented by the Indian representatives at the Conference, accepts the policy of reciprocity of treatment between India and the Dominions, and recommends the Memorandum to the favourable consideration of the Governments concerned." [1]

It was also suggested in the Memorandum that Indians, subject to the rule of monogamy, should be allowed to bring in their wives and minor children. The same principles as those applying to other Asiatic races should govern the admission of Indians to the Dominions for purposes of labour or settlement, and where this was not possible there should be reciprocity of treatment.

The Imperial War Conference met again in 1918; once more this question came up and again the Indian representatives circulated a Memorandum. This drew attention to the disabilities from which Indians were still suffering in British Columbia and South Africa; the difficulties and disadvantages of Indians intending

[1] Cmd. 8566, p. 120.

to visit the Dominions and the question of future immigration were also touched upon. Finally, after more discussion and exchange of opinions between representatives of India and the Dominions, the principle approved of in the previous year was further developed. In order to make quite certain that the Dominions should have complete control of the kind of immigrants they accepted, it was resolved that " it is an inherent function of the Governments of the several communities of the British Commonwealth, including India, that each should enjoy complete control of the composition of its own population, by means of restrictions on immigration from any other communities." [1]

The resolution went on to state that for purposes of trade, education, and travel, British citizens domiciled in any part of the Empire should be freely admitted to any other part. The recommendation contained in the Memorandum of the previous year respecting the admission of wives and minor children was renewed. The other questions mentioned in the Memorandum of 1918 and not contained in the resolution, such as the political disabilities of Indians domiciled in British Columbia and South Africa, and the trading and other restrictions placed upon them in the latter country, were recommended to the further consideration of the countries concerned. At the time, there was good reason for hoping that this difficult question was at long last to be settled. The Dominions no longer had any reason for fearing annihilation by hordes of Indians, and it seemed therefore only a matter of administrative

[1] Cmd. 9177, p. 195.

regulation to remove the few remaining causes of friction. This happy result, however, was not destined to be so easily attained.

In this phase of Imperial politics, as in almost everything else, the post-war period has been a period of reaction. As we have seen, one of the many effects of the War was to stimulate the spirit of Nationalism in the Dominions. This has served to make them more than ever sensitive on the question of Oriental immigration and the purity of their stock. At the same time, India's participation in the War, her admission, first to the Imperial Conference, then to the League of Nations, and the marked advance in her constitutional status by the India Act of 1919, produced a similar result in that country.

Little has been done since the War to settle the outstanding difficulties, and the result has been that they are beginning to assume an importance out of all proportion to the magnitude of the original causes, till, in the words of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, "this problem threatens at no distant date to acquire the character of a problem of foreign policy." The legislation on the subject in South Africa in 1914 had left untouched many thorny questions relating to Indians in that Dominion. The Asiatic Trading and Land Act, 1919, gave rise to very serious results both in South Africa and India. This Act added still further restrictions to the activities of Indians in South Africa, and reduced the policy of the Transvaal toward them to legal form.[1]

The New Zealand Immigration Restriction Amend-

[1] *Round Table*, March 1920.

ment Bill, December 1920, though aimed primarily against Chinese, indicated a growing hostility in that Dominion to Orientals in general.[1]

When, therefore, the Conference of Prime Ministers met in 1921 the atmosphere was much less favourable for a reasonable settlement than it had been three years before. An important step was however taken—a step which General Smuts regarded as profoundly unwise. The Conference passed a resolution which still further committed Australia, New Zealand, and Canada to a favourable treatment of the Indian questions. "The Conference, while reaffirming the resolution of the Imperial War Conference of 1918, that each community of the British Commonwealth should enjoy complete control of the composition of its own population by means of restrictions on immigration from any other of the communities, recognises that there is an incongruity between the position of India as an equal member of the British Empire and the existence of disabilities upon British Indians lawfully domiciled in some other parts of the Empire. The Conference is accordingly of the opinion that in the interests of the solidarity of the British Commonwealth it is desirable that the rights of such Indians to citizenship should be recognised." [2]

The South African representatives found it impossible to agree to this resolution, and the Indian representatives, while thanking the Conference, expressed their grave concern at the condition of their fellow-country-

[1] *Round Table*, December 1920.

[2] *Summary of Proceedings of the Conference of Prime Ministers*, 1921, Cmd. 1474, p. 8.

men in that Dominion. They hoped that a satisfactory solution would be discovered by direct negotiations.

In the following year Mr. Srinavasa Sastri visited Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, in order to procure better treatment for Indians in those countries. In his report he expressed himself satisfied with the results of his visit. He was everywhere well received in the Dominions, and he stressed the value of direct negotiations between India and the Dominions. He believed that the appointment of properly accredited representatives would not only facilitate the realisation of the immediate object in view, but by establishing personal contacts between the different countries, would help to promote a spirit of Imperial solidarity. "The average citizen of the Dominions still regards India as a land of mixed splendour and poverty, barbaric in outlook and aspiration, as well as in magnificence." Mr. Sastri pointed out that the development of trade relations between India and the Dominions, by bringing cultured Indians into touch with those countries, would go far to dissipate the phantom of race-superiority, born of an imperfect appreciation of Indian capacity.[1]

In the debate on the subject at the Imperial Conference, 1923, the opposing views were clearly set forth by General Smuts and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru.[2] General Smuts argued that the demands of the Indian representatives for the extension of equal rights of citizenship to their fellow-countrymen residing in the Dominions arose from a misconception. In his opinion,

[1] Reported in *The Times*, March 24, 1924.
[2] Cmd. 1988, p. 72 *et seq.*

there existed in the Empire at the present time many stages of citizenship. "In some parts British subjects have no political rights whatever, in others they have modified rights of one kind or another, in others again they have the fullest political rights . . . there is no indignity or insult at all in the denial of such equality." "Private citizens," he said, "should derive their rights not from a common kingship, which is the binding link between the different parts of the Empire and not a source of rights, but from the authority of the State in which they live." He pointed out that just as there was no difficulty on the question of immigration with China or Japan, so with India there could be no friction if the Empire were regarded as a League of Nations. "I would therefore suggest that for the resolution of the last Conference on the subject, there be substituted a resolution affirming the right of each portion of the Empire to regulate citizenship as well as immigration as domestic questions for its own handling, and not affecting the status or dignity of other portions of the Empire, and expressing the opinion that provision for the reciprocal treatment of the nationals of the States of the Empire should not be looked upon as unfriendly or otherwise affecting the good resolutions of these States *inter se.*" [1]

It seems fairly clear, however, that General Smuts' conception of the British Empire as a League of Nations is far from realisation. India at the present time is in a peculiarly difficult transitional state between external control and self-government; she cannot by any stretch of imagination be regarded, as General

[1] Cmd. 1988, p. 140.

Smuts suggests, as a sovereign State in complete control of her own destiny. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru pointed this out, and also that no purely legal enactments could settle a question of this sort, in which so much of pure sentiment and pride of race were involved. In a speech of great eloquence he put before the Conference the case of his countrymen abroad as it appeared in India and to him. "I do fight let me tell you quite frankly as a subject of King George, and I fight for a place in his household, and I will not be content with a place in his stables . . . when Izzat (which means honour) is at stake we prefer death to anything else . . . any inequality of Indian nationals enters like iron into our soul. It cuts to the quick our national pride and our new consciousness; it permeates and sours our whole outlook in regard to Imperial relationship. It makes the task of the Indian Government in governing India infinitely more difficult." This question, he said, was one which rises far above mere constitutional rights and expediency. "Constitutional rights can only be exercised with prudence and discretion up to a certain point, and beyond that point you have to allow those constitutional rights to be subordinated to statesmanship, prudence, and discretion. . . . Fulfil our aspirations in our own country for self-government, fulfil our aspirations for a position of equality inside the Dominions and inside the Colonies, and India will stand shoulder to shoulder with you through thick and thin. . . . Make no mistake, it is by sentiment and by the preservation of that sentiment that you retain us. . . . If we are incorporated within the Common-

wealth, think what we shall mean to the peace of the world, with our ideals of self-government, bridging as we do the East and the West, shouldering the burdens which are yours as well as ours for the service of humanity."

With the exception of South Africa the Dominions agreed to his suggestion that they should appoint Committees to discuss with the Committee sent out by the Indian Government the position of Indians domiciled within their territories. It is therefore possible that, after many abortive attempts at settlement, a question which might have gone far to disrupt the Empire will be at length settled in a manner which gives substantial satisfaction to all concerned.

The attitude of the Dominions to this question has been conditioned throughout by one primary consideration—the fear of extermination; and in view of the fewness of their numbers as contrasted with the teeming millions of Asia, and of their vast unpeopled spaces as compared with the overcrowded lands of the Far East, this fear is neither unnatural nor unfounded. They fear extermination—economic, political, and social—and they deserve the sympathy of those more fortunate countries in which such tremendous problems do not arise. Economically, the Oriental is a menace to the white pioneer. He can work at lower wages than a white man, and under conditions which would be impossible to the latter. The workers of the Dominions have won for themselves conditions of labour which enable them both to bring up their families in comfort and enlightenment, and to take their share in the political life of their country. The

Indian, on the other hand, is willing to work, eat, and sleep in the same restricted quarters. He has little or no interest in the political and social life of the country in which he has settled, and it is possible for him, by virtue of his lower standards, to underbid his white competitor. This applies not only to the industrial worker, but also to the trader. In the Transvaal, for example, it has frequently happened that the white man has been obliged to close his shop and to move away because of the competition of Indian traders. With the departure of the white man, the tone of the neighbourhood goes down, land values sink, and the community as a whole is the poorer. It is no matter for surprise that the South African, Australian, or New Zealander, who finds himself in such circumstances, is not convinced by the statesman-like reply: "These difficulties will disappear with education."

The people of the Dominions object to the Indians on political grounds as well. Naturally, they cherish those free democratic institutions which they have inherited from their forefathers, and which they wish to hand on unimpaired to their children. They have just emerged from the struggle for existence, and they do not feel that their traditions are yet sufficiently hardened to justify them in embarking upon doubtful experiments in the political education of an alien race.

On social grounds they are equally afraid. The Dominions are developing young and healthy nations, and they are anxious that these shall reproduce all the best qualities of the race from which they are sprung. In Australia, for example, the standard of

health is said to be higher than it is in any other part of the world, its death-rate is low, and though a large part of the country is tropical or semi-tropical, it is entirely free from those many diseases and plagues which are endemic in India and the Far East. At best, the standard of the average Indian who goes to the Dominions for permanent settlement is not as high as that of the white citizens of those countries. The following quotations from Indian leaders would seem to make this abundantly clear. Mrs. Naidu is reported to have stated in a speech to Indians at Mombasa that " after touring Kenya I have reached the conclusion that Europeans had reasons for desiring segregation. . . . I have seen most of you wearing dirty clothing, sleeping in dirty bed-linen, and living in filthy houses, yet you desire equality. You will not get equality unless you correct yourselves." [1]

Mr. Gandhi, the greatest of Indian champions, himself lamented the low standard of life and the filthy habits of his fellow-countrymen : " The plague has found a home in India—cholera has always been with us, malaria takes an annual toll of thousands . . . the plague has been driven out from every part of the world ; Glasgow drove it out as soon as it entered, in Johannesburg it appeared but once. It is a matter of wonderment that when the plague is working havoc in our rural quarters, cantonments as a whole remain free. Unless we alter the conditions of our cities, rid ourselves of dirty habits, reform our caste-system, Swaraj for us can have no value." [2]

[1] *The Times*, February 22, 1924.
[2] *Mahatma Gandhi, Life, Writings and Speeches*. p. 310.

Further, the presence of large numbers of Indians in the Dominions would inevitably lead to intermixture, and, so far, anthropologists and psychologists are doubtful as to its results. So long as it is not absolutely proved that intermixture on a large scale will mean improvement of the race as a whole, people in the Dominions are justified in regarding the idea with horror, as an act almost tantamount to national suicide.

Finally, as in Kenya, the average citizen of the Dominion suspects Indians of hypocrisy when they demand equal rights. India they know is notoriously a land of inequalities, not only political and social, but also spiritual. "Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

The members of the Indian depressed classes now residing in the Dominions, though they do not enjoy complete political citizenship, are in a far better position than their fellow-countrymen at home. Let India herself imitate the example of the Dominions in this respect, instead of demanding that these countries should extend to Indians privileges and rights which many of them could never expect to enjoy in India.

The Indians also have their case, and that must be considered. As far as the question of extermination resulting from unrestricted immigration is concerned, the Dominions need no longer have any fear. The resolutions of successive Imperial Conferences and the repeated statements of responsible officials, both in England and in India, have settled that.

The best minds in India are at one with the Government in regarding further immigration of Indians with disapproval. "There is a growing sentiment in my country that we should not send our nationals outside anywhere. . . . I was probably the strongest exponent of the view that there should be no immigration from India outside on any conditions whatsoever. We do not want our nation outside India to appear as a nation of coolies—we have had enough of that. There is plenty of scope for the conservation of the energy of my countrymen in my own country. We want them to rise to the full height of their stature in their own country. The Dominions therefore need have no fear on that account." [1]

This question, therefore, now narrows itself down to the future status of Indians already domiciled in the Dominions. All parties seem to be agreed that the admission of Indians of education and standing for purposes of education, trade, and travel, might be of great advantage both to the Dominions and to India. The present position in other respects is not without hope, since already in New Zealand and in Australia, Indians lawfully domiciled in those countries will shortly receive full rights of citizenship. In Canada the question only arises in British Columbia, where practically all the Indians reside. In that province they at present have no municipal, provincial or Dominion franchise, but otherwise are on a footing of equality with other Canadians. The argument which has been frequently put forward, that in a country where political parties are so nicely balanced

[1] Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Cmd. 1988, p. 81.

admission of Indians to the franchise would mean that the government would be handed over to the Indians, needs only to be stated to be rejected. If the argument urged by the members from British Columbia in the debate in the Canadian House of Commons on June 29, 1923, is a fair statement of their case, then there is no obvious reason why complete rights of citizenship should not be extended to the Indians at once.[1] They are in any case no less fit for the franchise than many of those strange communities from Eastern and Central Europe scattered over the prairie, and as British subjects they have a right to expect, if anything, a more favourable treatment.

In South Africa the outlook is still very dark. Indians who were born in that country, and whose parents were born in South Africa before them, find themselves still regarded as aliens and inferiors. If the habits of some of them and their manner of living do not conform to European standards, there is much in the suggestion of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru : " It is the duty of the Government of that country to see that those standards are raised." After all, the Indian coolie has done yeoman-service in the economic development of the country, and no matter what his defects may be, it is only just that these services should be remembered. In the meantime, it is to be hoped that both the Indians and the Europeans in South Africa will be able to come to some agreement on the question of restrictions on Indian residence, ownership of land, and trade. Indeed, in face of the many overwhelming problems which already oppress the Union, it would

[1] *Canadian Hansard*, June 29, 1923.

be unwise and unjust to ask too much from South Africa. The question of Indian immigration is, as Mr. Burton once put it, not one of trade only, but of life and death, for the South Africans are a white minority on a black continent, with a white population divided into Dutch and English, a large coloured community and six million natives. It is not unnatural that they should view the advent of the Indian with suspicion and dread. It may be that the suggestion contained in the *Round Table* for December 1922 may offer a way out. The proposal is that a special Government for Indians might be set up, which would bear the same relation to the Union Government as the Crown Colonies Governments bear to the Imperial Government. If, however, the Indians at home persist in their demands and agitations, this scheme for full political rights will never be put into force.

The question is rendered very much more serious by the fact that India has made the cause of her sons abroad her own. In successive Imperial Conferences it has been pointed out that on this question alone all classes, creeds, and shades of political opinion are united. To the Indians the treatment of her fellow-countrymen in other parts of the Empire has become the touchstone of British sincerity. This view may be, and probably is, wrong-headed, and in view of the infinite ramifications of the problem, unreasonable. It is none the less natural and real. To the Indians it is a question of sentiment and national dignity. They are justly proud of their ancient civilisation and their ancient traditions. They believe, perhaps

rightly, that their culture, and the things for which it stands, are superior to anything known in the West. They point to the magnificent efforts of India during the War, and their national consciousness has been quickened into life by the rapid development which their country has recently made in its constitutional and international status. For them, sentiment, imagination, as well as human justice, enters into the question. Izzat—honour—is at stake, and rather than lose this they would lose life itself.

This whole question is, after all, only one phase of a world-wide problem, the problem of racialism, and it cannot be expected that the solution will be found in a day. Its solution is so vital, not only for the Empire, but for all humanity, that in the search for a settlement acceptable to all no expenditure of treasure, time, and human endeavour, can be deemed too great. " This question must be discussed in no petty, huxtering spirit of reciprocity only, far less of militant animosity and retaliation, but on those broad principles of justice and equality which are now more than ever the guiding principles of the British Empire." [1]

In the search for a solution, reason, logic, and justice will not in themselves prove sufficient guides, but those engaged must bring to their deliberations on this deeply human problem a spirit of compromise, sympathy, and imagination. If, as may well happen, it is found that a settlement can only be achieved through sacrifice on both sides, then, in the interests of those wider claims which transcend considerations of province, nation, and race, that sacrifice must be made.

[1] Cmd. 9177, p. 248.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION

If, with all its special advantages, the British Empire fails to solve the problems with which it is confronted, it is difficult to believe that any other power on earth can succeed. A study of the disruptive forces now active within it should be left neither to the "die-hard" on the one hand, nor to the sentimental internationalist on the other, who sees good in all countries but his own. In a vast congeries of States like the British Empire it is inevitable that frictions should arise from time to time, and it is natural that these should occur at the points of contact between the various sections which compose it. In the interests, therefore, both of Imperial solidarity and of world-peace, it is necessary to keep a vigilant and constant watch on these points.

The problem of Dominion status illustrates friction at one of these. It is really a question of international co-operation in miniature, for it is the same in principle as the larger question with which the League of Nations is now faced. In working it out, both in the Empire and in the League, it is clear that all States concerned must expect limitation of some sort as the inevitable price of success. The old belief that nationalism was

a sufficient end in itself is now generally discredited, and the watchword of the twentieth century is not "My country, right or wrong," but international co-operation.

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that Dominion nationalism in itself is wholly evil, for there is undoubtedly much good in it. The ideal of international and interracial uniformity by whatever means attained is even more abhorrent than nationalism. "It is not the mission of the British Empire to standardise the peoples of the world, nor to force human material into a fixed mould, but rather to enable them to develop towards greater, fuller nationality."[1] The differences between individuals, between nations, and between races enrich the world and make for progress, and it is not desirable that the Anglo-Saxon type or that any other should become universal. So long as all are agreed that the peace of the world must be preserved, the more differences there are between the peoples of the world the better.

The question which the Dominions must answer for themselves then is this: "How can we best co-operate in the world's work so as to bear our just share of the burden of civilisation?" They can remain within the Empire or they can leave it, but in either case their responsibility is still there, and from it no civilised State can escape. Since Imperial citizenship brings with it the possibility of pooling resources and the elimination of wasteful overlapping, it appears that the Dominions will be well advised to remain within the Empire. Fortunately this is the view held

[1] *War-Time Speeches of General Smuts*, p. 33.

by every responsible statesman in the Dominions, and it is also the unmistakable opinion of the vast majority of Dominion citizens.

Imperial citizenship imposes restrictions upon the Mother-country as well as upon the Dominions. The latter are unquestionably right when they insist that in the future there shall be no more talk of Great Britain sending invitations to foreign countries to attend an international gathering. This must be done by the British Empire.[1] The Foreign Office must recognise that it is the Foreign Office of the Empire, not merely of the United Kingdom, and adjust its habits accordingly. From that there can be no going back.

Doubtless the machinery of the Imperial Conference will be brought up to date and its secretariat will be improved and developed. It is essential, however, to remember that substance must now be given to the theory of continuous consultation, that Dominion participation in foreign affairs should be real, and that the diplomatic unity of the Empire should be preserved. Once the present cloud of doubt and suspicion is dispelled and confidence is again established, the other questions will settle themselves.

The problem in India illustrates one phase of the racial question. To begin with, it is clear that in an Oriental setting representative institutions may well take on many features unknown to them in the West. It would be unjust, however, both to India and to the principles of representative government to measure their failure in India by these differences, and in fact

[1] *Canadian Hansard*, June 9, 1924.

it might be much sounder to regard these as indications of success. In working them out, Indian statesmanship will always be faced with the problem of minority rights, and it is possible that she may some day provide the world with the solution of this very practical problem of democratic government. It is clear that one of the most pressing needs in India is education, and more education, for it is impossible to carry out the present policy without a corresponding spread of enlightenment. Though it is too soon to pass judgment on the new Councils, yet in view of their actual achievements so far, in spite of the tremendous strain to which they have been constantly subjected since their inception, there is good ground for still believing in them. Finally, the speed with which further extensions of responsible government are made must depend, since Great Britain is a trustee as well as an instructor in representative government, not only upon the proved ability of Indians to govern themselves and the growing literacy of the Indian peoples, but also upon a due consideration of the interests of the depressed classes on the one hand and of the Indian princes on the other.

It is evident that the people of the Empire as a whole have not been sufficiently alive to the magnitude of the work which is being done in the Crown Colonies. The responsibility of Trusteeship must now be brought home to every citizen, and, as far as the Dominions are concerned, interest in the Crown Colonies would be greatly stimulated by the admission of a larger number of Dominion candidates to the Services. Nowhere has the work of the Empire been finer, and nowhere have the British officials been more inclined to hide their

light under a bushel. The result of this has been that the general public has been left to form its opinion of the Empire's work in the West Indies, in West Africa, and in the Far East, upon the speeches and writings of fanatical and usually ignorant critics.[1]

The development of a Diplomatic Service within the Empire would undoubtedly do much good. It would serve not only to bring the Dominions into closer touch with each other—a thing which is almost as necessary as that they should be in close, constant communication with the Mother-country—it would also help to smooth away difficulties between the Dominions and India, and in view of the vast importance of this, not only for the Empire but for the world, nothing which will help to create a mutual understanding and sympathy should be neglected.

Perfect consultative machinery, however, and constant communication between Governments are not in themselves enough; there must be something more. There must be constant communication between the

[1] There appears to be good evidence for believing that Kenya is, in some respects, an exception to this general rule. In reference to a particularly brutal murder of a native by a European, the Duke of Devonshire, then (1923) Colonial Secretary, in a despatch to the Governor of Kenya, stated: "I am, however, bound to record my opinion that such cases as have occurred in Kenya have been marked by great brutality and that no sufficient punishment has been meted out to the offender."—Norman Leys, *Kenya*, note on p. 164.

If the interests of the white settlers in Kenya are incompatible with our obligations as trustees for the natives, then for the good name of the Empire, no matter what promises have been made by Colonial Secretaries in the past, the interests of this handful of white settlers must be subordinated to those of the natives. It should not be forgotten that the great Dominions would welcome with open arms the kind of settlers who have gone to Kenya.

peoples of the Empire, so that the spirit of comradeship which was so marked during the War shall still continue in the time of peace, and this can be done in a variety of ways.

Improvements in the means of transport and communication must now be undertaken on a large scale. Ocean fares and railway fares must come down, in order that the man of moderate means as well as the millionaire may have an opportunity of seeing for himself what the Empire is, and the things for which it stands. Much still remains to be done in the development of an adequate Imperial News Service, which, while not being partisan, would diffuse a general knowledge of what is going on throughout the Empire.

The Parliamentary Association has already done much good. It has inaugurated visits of members of the Parliaments of the Empire to the different countries, and by so doing has not only made these countries known to them, but has provided the visitors themselves, drawn as they are from all the Parliaments of the Empire, with an opportunity of establishing valuable personal ties. The Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire, which is another fruit of the Parliamentary Association's efforts, will undoubtedly do much to promote a general understanding of Imperial questions and Imperial politics.

The development of exchanges of pupils and teachers between the schools of the Empire must be carried further, and this should now be recognised as a regular and important part of the work of Educational Authorities. Exchanges of students, lecturers, and University professors must be worked out, and no consideration

of University red-tape should be allowed to stand in the way of the full application of a general policy.[1] It is essential that these people who are the future leaders of public life in the Empire should be given some general knowledge of the problems with which they will be called upon to grapple, and of the races and peoples whom they will be expected to understand. Cultural, athletic, and business relationships of all sorts must be further extended, and nothing should be neglected which in any way is calculated to promote a feeling of common interest and mutual sympathy, in order that the great harmonising mission of the British Empire may be carried through with success.

[1] *Report of the Third Congress of Empire Universities*, p. 387.

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